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ABSTRACT

This document contains 29 articles on the problems of indigenous women in a rapidly changing world, their unequal access to knowledge and resources, and their efforts to take an active role in solving those problems. The articles are arranged into nine chapters: Keeping Traditions Alive; Changing Gender Roles; The Struggle for Self-Determination and Human Rights; The Challenge of Modern Changes; Confronting the "New World Order"; Getting Organised and Participating; Networking and Building Solidarity; Epilogue; and The 1995 Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women. Individual articles are: "The Arhuacan Woman: Our Life Is Our Art" (Leonor Zalabata); "Maori Women and Natural Resource Management: Towards a Sustainable Future" (Elizabeth McKinley); "Healthy Communities, Healthy Women: Society and Gender in the Andes" (Wara Alderete); "Changes in Women's Status in Micronesia: An Anthropological Approach" (Beatriz Moral); "Finding the Balance: Between Ethnicity and Gender among Inuit in Artic Canada" (Helle Hogh); "The Chamoru and Guam" (Ulla Hasager); "Inside Out" (C. T. Perez); "Thieves" (Anne Perez Hattori); "The Batwa Women of Rwanda: Confronting Discrimination" (Claudine Mukamakombe, Clotilde Musabeyezu, Pulcherie Umubyeyi, Elyvanie Kamondo); "Pakeha Land Legislation in Aotearoa: The Continuous Resistance by Maori Women" (Moana Sinclair); "Women Ask for Peace and Justice on Bougainville" (Daphne Zale); "Naga Women: A Struggle for Human Rights" (Shimreichon Luithui); "Hill Tribe Women of Thailand: Where To Turn Now?" (Anchalee Phonklieng); "Indigenous Women in Indonesia: A Portrait" (Arimbi H.P.); "Indigenous Ukpiovwin Women of Delta State, Nigeria: The Challenge of Development" (Mabel I. E. Tobrise); "Wines and Spirits: The Issue of Alcoholism and the Cordillera Women" (Bernice A. See); "Wildlife Tourism and Its Impact on Indigenous Maasai Women in East Africa" (Naomi Kipuri); "The 'New World Order' and Indigenous Women: The Case of the Okanagan People, Canada" (Jeanette Armstrong); "Globalization and Its Impacts on Indigenous Women: The Philippine Case" (Victoria Tauli-Corpuz); "Tuareg

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INDIGENOUS WOMEN: THE RIGHT TO A VOICE

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INDIGENOUS WOMEN: THE RIGHT TO A VOICE

Editor
Diana Vinding

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FOREWORD

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FOREWORD

> *We, indigenous women, wish to be recognised as people with rights, not only duties. We need to be seen, within our families and communities, not only as cooks and child-bearers, but as female human beings. This is what we want, not to be seen as second class people. We need our voices to be heard as the expression of one single thought and one heart in order to strengthen our position as indigenous peoples.*
>
> Blanca Chancoso,
> at the Second Continental Meeting of Indigenous Women
> held in Mexico, 4-7 December 1997

The purpose of this Document has been to give voice to indigenous women from all over the world so they - with the words of Blanca Chancoso - can be heard and seen as 'people with rights, not only duties'.

The Document has been under way for a long time. IWGIA's first Document on indigenous women - *Indigenous Women on the Move* - was published almost eight years ago, in 1990. At the time the idea was to follow up on it with a second volume. This never happened, and other plans for a document on indigenous women did not materialise either. However, in 1995, during the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing, the Asian Indigenous Women's Network and IWGIA agreed to relaunch the idea and the call for contributions was initiated in early 1996.

Almost two years have elapsed since then for compiling such a document is not without problems. Indigenous women are busy women, deeply involved in the day to day survival of their families and communities, and actively committed to their people's struggle for self-determination and human rights. This leaves them little time to write or even take a break in their activities in order to be interviewed.

Therefore, and although we have been able to gather 27 articles from 22 countries, this Document, like the first one, has shortcomings in terms of geographic representativity - missing are for instance contributions from Australia and southern Africa - and in terms of issues since some of the issues which are known to seriously impact on the situation of indigenous women like for instance mining and trafficking with women are only incidentally touched upon.

However, we feel that the voices heard in this Document give a substantial overview of indigenous women's situation, their problems, their concerns and their hopes for the future.

Why a Document on Indigenous Women?

Since the publication of *Indigenous Women on the Move*, important changes in the situation of indigenous women have occurred. They have indeed moved and much has been achieved. Indigenous women from every part of the world now manifest themselves, get organised, and demand influence. Some, as reported in this document, have gained political influence and take part in decision making not only at the community level but within national political structures.

The 1990s have also seen the formation of the first international indigenous women's networks and indigenous women have arranged several conferences both on the regional and international level. These include the First Asian Indigenous Women's Conference held in Baguio, Philippines in 1993, the Conference on Pacific Women in Hawai`i in 1995 (see the article by Cruz and Hasager in this volume) and two Continental Meetings of IndigenousWomen from the Americas in 1995 and 1997 respectively (see Nellys Palomo's report). In 1998 two more important international events are planned: the Second Asian Indigenous Women's Conference in Kanchanaburi, Thailand and a Conference of African Indigenous Women in Agadir, Morocco.

At the global level a milestone in the history of indigenous women was the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing where 110 indigenous women participated, representing almost the same number of organisations from 26 countries. It gave an opportunity for women to collectively understand the global situation and to reflect on common issues. The Beijing Declaration, which we bring in this Document, goes to the roots of women's oppression and rightly criticises the Beijing Draft Platform for Action for not questioning the 'New World Order' or presenting a coherent analysis of why the goals of equality, development and peace have become more elusive to women in spite of three UN conferences on women from 1975 to 1994. It also voices indigenous women's demands to the international community, governments and NGOs as well as their own communities. More importantly, it has provided indigenous women with some directions for future actions in improving their situation and that of their communities.

Indigenous women have thus become far more visible, more vocal and much more assertive compared with eight years ago. However, as this Document also shows, much still has to be done. For the majority of indigenous women the situation remains tough. Despite their important role as providers, workers and activists, indigenous women are still to a large extent overlooked. Although they often are the ones who bear the brunt of modern changes and development policies, they are too often ignored or forgotten by the development agencies or NGOs and even by their own communities. They are marginalised, often subjected to all forms of discrimination and oppression, have no access to information and get little training and education, and do not participate in decision making. They may take an active part in their peoples' struggle for self-determination and human rights, yet they remain underrepresented in indigenous organisations and are seldom heard in international fora.

This is why IWGIA feels it is important to provide indigenous women with a platform where they can voice their concerns and their hopes and make their situation known to the international community. It is our hope that the Document may in this way contribute to strengthen their position as women and as indigenous peoples.

A short presentation

The articles in this Document present a broad spectrum of perspectives and greatly differ in length and style. Some have been written by indigenous academics, others by grassroots representatives. A few are interviews made by non-indigenous women and in one case by a man, and two take a more artistic approach with a short poem and an essay.

Some of the articles are short, concrete narrations of the day to day life of indigenous women, and the problems and issues they face in a rapidly changing world. Others take a more analytical approach, looking at global development trends and the role of international financing institutes and multilateral trading bodies and assessing their impact on indigenous women and indigenous communities.

This variety contributes to give a picture of the many different realities and problems indigenous women are facing. At the same time it underlines the fact that indigenous women do not constitute a homogeneous category but differ in terms of traditional cultural background, age, social conditions, and education.

Obviously, many of the issues which the Document touches upon are not specific for indigenous women. Poverty, domestic violence, marginalisation and oppression are the same problems many non-indigenous women in the South and the North face, and they, too, suffer from the effects of globalisation and the 'New World Order'. Yet, there can be no doubt that this is not an ordinary publication on women. As readers will notice, the Document is characterised by a number of recurrent themes which set it apart and give it a definite indigenous tonality.

One of these themes is the relationship to Mother Earth, the link to the Land 'which is both physical, spiritual and genealogical' as Sinclair puts it. Any encroachment on the land and its resources is therefore seen as not only endangering indigenous women's and their communities' physical survival but as a threat of cultural extinction. Hence the concern with the issue of cultural and intellectual property rights and the emphasis on land rights and self-determination - two other recurrent themes in this Document.

Another frequently evoked topic is that of cultural traditions and values (e.g. language, social structures, religion and cosmovision, ecological principles or art), women's special knowledge of these values and their important role in keeping them alive.

From a feminist point of view, this Document also strikes its own tone. Most articles deal in some way or another with gender inequality, its impact on women's situation and the need for more equal opportunities. However, the present conditions are seen as the direct result of the influence colonisation, Christianisation and modernisation have had on societies that previously believed in the complementarity between men and women or conferred certain status and even power on women. This is why the attitude of indigenous women as expressed in this Document is not one of confrontation women-men. On the contrary, indigenous women feel very much part of their family, their community: 'It is not possible for us to speak in isolation of indigenous woman without speaking of the entire community, of the men, of the children and elderly, and of all those who form our community' says Zalabata, and others see the participation of men as equally essential and necessary. 'Unlike Western feminist thinking, we cannot afford to separate from Maori men' states Sinclair. But she continues: 'However, we cannot suffocate under the manifestations of their damaged mindsets either'. What is needed, therefore, is to 'decolonise' the men's mindsets, re-educate them so they may give up their adopted white patriarchal ways so that men and women together, side by side, can fight against the 'dominating system' which has destroyed their former traditions for more equal relationships.

In other words, it can be said that while indigenous women affirm their specific, practical gender needs, their overall strategic interests - at this point of time - very much coincide with those of their men: the right to land and self-determination, and the respect of human rights. And what they claim is to be at the side of their men in the struggle for these rights.

The Document

Because most of the articles touch upon several topics at the same time, it has been a difficult task to structure the Document, and the grouping of articles in eight different chapters may at times seem somewhat arbitrary. Yet, we also felt it was necessary to highlight the main issues taken up by the articles by putting them under different headings.

The two opening articles in **Chapter 1 - Keeping Traditions Alive** - underscore the vital role played by women in relation to traditional values, seen from two different perspectives. For Zalabata, it is a question of safeguarding and defending the values and principles that her people, the Arhuacans of Colombia (South America), have been able to preserve despite 500 years of colonisation. McKinley, on the other hand, writes from the view point of the Maori women of New Zealand/Aotearoa. They have over the past 200 years suffered considerable cultural losses in terms of land, valued species of flora and fauna and language, and her article describes how the Maori women are now trying to actively reclaim and protect these values.

Chapter 2 - Changing Gender Roles - examines why women have lost the status and role they used to enjoy in pre-colonial times, and what changes have taken place. Although writing from two different parts of the world - Argentina and Chuuk Island, Oceania - both Alderete and Moral agree that it is the patriarchal ideology introduced by colonisation and Christianisation that is largely responsible for the marginalisation and subordination of women. As for the Nunavut women of Canada, while also being caught between traditions and modern times, their dilemma, as presented by Høgh, is somewhat different: they fear that the newly acquired collective right to self-government will entail cultural considerations based on tradition that may jeopardise their individual rights as women and Canadian citizens - i.e. the right to personal freedom, security and equality before the law without discrimination.

Chapter 3 - The Struggle for Self-determination and Human Rights - addresses the issue of racial and cultural discrimination as one of the factors behind the struggle for indigenous rights, and gives some examples of the role played by women in this struggle.

Chapter 4 - The Challenge of Modern Changes - reflects on how women are affected by development and how they cope. Common to most women is their unequal access 'to knowledge and information about the forces and factors which affect their lives and their communities' (Phonklieng) and to the benefits from the resources their land generates whether it is oil (Tobrise) or income from wildlife tourism (Kipuri). See, in her article on alcoholism and the Cordillera women, illustrates how modern changes bereave women of their customary productive and ritual roles and threaten the unity and solidarity in the community.

Yet, as the articles also show, all these women, despite their vulnerable position, try to overcome their problems by engaging in micro-credit schemes and income generating activities, by joining forces so they support each other in marketing their produces, or by being pro-active and campaign for a liquor ban like the Cordillera women.

Other new challenges are examined in **Chapter 5 - Confronting the New World Order**. Armstrong focuses on the development of transnational trading of biogenetically engineered products and the patenting of human biological materials. Tauli-Corpuz concentrates on the actual and potential impacts of the economic globalisation. Both concur in seeing the 'New World Order' as inherently anti-women, anti-poor and anti-indigenous and a threat, as Tauli-Corpuz puts it, to the 'cultural and biological diversity and the diversity of economic and political systems which indigenous peoples have developed and sustained'. Therefore, as she concludes, 'It is to the interest of indigenous women to steadfastly challenge this globalization agenda. Any system which degrades and commodifies women should be challenged and changed'.

In order to challenge this agenda, it is important, as stated in the Beijing Declaration, that indigenous women organise and participate in the indigenous and modern socio-political structures and systems. **Chapter 6 - Getting Organised and Participating -** provides several examples of how indigenous women organise, at grass roots, local and national level. A common experience is that indigenous women - as women in general - face many constraints in this process, like cultural traditions, lack of resources (e.g. time or money) and outright opposition from the men in their communities. An often heard accusation is that the women do not respect their traditional leaders and are trying to divide their people.

Nevertheless, an increasing number of women overcome these obstacles. The Guaraní women are one example and as the interview from French Guyana shows, it is even possible for a woman to become a customary chief. Indigenous women are also increasingly admitted within modern political structures, as the case of the tribal women from India shows, and they sometimes even play leading political roles as in the case of the Inuit women of Greenland.

But indigenous women also gain strength and influence working together at the international level. **Chapter 7 - Networking and Building Solidarity -** describes different initiatives of international cooperation, and a common trait is that sharing experiences and devising solutions together also strengthens women's common indigenous identity and creates leverage when putting demands to the international community.

The question of joining forces with non-indigenous women is also touched upon. As pointed out by Lynette Cruz - as well as by other contributors - this is not an easy endeavour, and many cultural gaps have to be bridged before reaching a basis for further collaboration. The effort, however, may be worthwhile for as Cruz states: 'The coming together of us as women is a practice session for the coming together of all peoples... (and) a preparation for the birth of something better'.

In **Chapter 8 - Epilogue: Women, Gender Studies and the International Indigenous Movement -** Sjørslev rounds up the Document by taking a look at how anthropology and gender studies have related to indigenouness, and what role feminist theory has had in understanding indigenous women's situation. Her conclusion is that up to now 'feminism - whether in the context of anthropological and other social sciences or in general - is a department apart from indigenous women's concerns'. A closer interaction could, however, benefit both parties, and provide more understanding, but also a more solid platform for action. And Sjørslev sees the need for action in order to redress the lack of balance in gender representation in indigenous leadership, especially at the community level. She writes: 'The importance of women's role in their local communities can no longer be overlooked' whether by their own people or by the non-indigenous world, as this is closely linked to their role in the international indigenous movement.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

IWGIA would like to express our grateful thanks to all the indigenous women who have taken the time to contribute to this Document and made it possible. Our thanks go also to the non-indigenous authors for their valuable contributions as well as to the International Committee of the Danish Women's Society, who kindly gave us the permission to print two articles based on papers presented at a seminar on *Natural Resource Management Amongst Indigenous Peoples - seen in a Gender Perspective* - which they organised in Ålborg, Denmark in October 1997.

Diana Vinding

CHAPTER 1

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KEEPING TRADITIONS ALIVE

Article 1 of the Beijing Declaration

The Earth is our Mother. From her we get our life, and our ability to live. It is our responsibility to care for our Mother and in caring for our Mother, we care for ourselves. Women, all females are manifestation of Mother Earth in human form.

THE ARHUACAN WOMAN

The Sierra Nevada mountain range in the northern part of Colombia is the home of the Arhuacan people, as well as of other indigenous Taironas like the Kogi and the Arsarios.

The Arhuacan live in isolated mountain valleys, making the most of the different climatic conditions by growing potatoes and breeding sheep in the heights, and cultivating maize, yuca, oranges and other crops down in the more temperate and semi-tropical zones.

In the late 1960s, the Arhuacan were among the first indigenous peoples of Colombia to organise themselves in order to assert their rights and protect their culture. It was also a reaction against the increasing encroachments on their traditional territory by outsiders, and one of the steps taken by the Arhuacan at the time was to prevent non-indigenous people from entering their territory.

OUR LIFE IS OUR ART

by Leonor Zalabata

In my opinion, women are most often spoken of in economic or political terms. The woman's situation is discussed within the framework of these categories but other aspects, other representations of her as part of mankind, as a human being are not being taken into account. The problem is that in any society political power is derived from the economic sector. By including the issue of the indigenous woman in any context, be it international or national, there is the risk of distorting reality and analysing the external system itself. As there is no indigenous country, a country where the legal system is our own, no true indigenous model exists. Therefore, the different individuals and international organisations interested in the issue of the indigenous woman or indigenous affairs in general can reflect and ultimately reach conclusions that are not in touch with indigenous conceptions and reality.

To be different does not mean to be inferior

I do not think that any *wati*, any indigenous woman from this part of the world, really feels or considers that because of the fact that men have different roles there is discrimination against women. The fact that boys and girls are educated differently in everything from housework to sleeping posture, for example, does not mean that women or men feel uncomfortable by sleeping in a certain position, because this is their tradition, their way of being. In a certain way this allows for a way of thinking that is different, but not inferior nor superior.

Equality does not mean that if men wear trousers so should women. That is not the issue. For us there are certain things which are gender specific and others which can be shared, such as the shoulder bag, for example. The shoulder bag's form is the same for men and women. In this there is no difference. Clothing on the other hand is different. But just because there is a difference does not mean that in indigenous communities women are undervalued. This type of discrimination does not exist.

In Arhuacan culture the woman is seen as a living force. There is no difference in our society between an indigenous man and an indigenous woman, an Arhuacan man and an Arhuacan woman. We have different, assigned roles; our duties are divided up. We consider maternity, for example, as something that belongs to us, but we also think about the fact that men are a part of the process and that their role is just as important as that of giving birth. The two functions are different but of equal importance. In the case of motherhood women can decide whether or not to have children and have them with or without a husband. They can make the decision and carry it out, while men, if they want to have a child, are dependent on women. In this case the difference is to the women's advantage. But outside of our society motherhood is seen differently: some speak of it as being a woman's punishment while still others see it as an obstacle to personal development for women, instead of seeing it as a possibility in which women can freely decide while men are not able to do so. Motherhood should be seen as a privilege for women and not as an obstacle, a disadvantage.

In this sense, too, I think it is important that we take the position that men have some advantages in some aspects and we have some in others. This is where we have equality, in the fact that we are different and have different tasks as opposed to what the outside system tries to impose on us in an attempt to culturally structure and standardise people, so that they produce in the way that the system wants them to produce.

When a girl is born, in our culture we say: 'she who will fetch water is born', or 'he who will chop wood is born', if it is a boy. We differentiate between the sexes by making reference to the tasks they will later carry out. It is also said that when a girl is born the mountain laughs and the birds cry, because her future activities are not connected to logging the forest in order to sow, and her work will not feed the birds. In the case of boys the opposite is said, that the mountain sheds tears and the birds laugh, because men destroy part of the mountain in order to cultivate it and, at the same time, the food they grow will also serve to feed the birds. Through these metaphors the difference is defined culturally, the community's cultural behaviour is defined and the metaphors reflect the consciousness of a difference in the functions - but not a superiority or inferiority between the functions.

Arhuacan women and children. Photo: Leonor Zalabata

The dominating system is the real problem

I do not think that the real problem is being a male or female Arhuacan but that there exists a dominating system, a system which is standardising everyone, and that this standardisation entails a loss of values both for indigenous men and indigenous women. This loss of cultural values allows for the penetration of the system and gives rise to vices, mistakes and internal contradictions in indigenous communities and peoples. Women are clearly affected by this, but I think that men are too. Ways of behaving not native to indigenous cultures, in this case the Arhuacan, are thus being introduced. If cases of machismo or discrimination are now found, it is due to the influence of the external system in the daily life of our families. In a traditional family we do not have this type of behaviour because disrespect for and discrimination of women are not a part of our culture.

I believe that among us there exists the freedom to decide and when one decides there are no gender differences, the important thing is simply the wisdom of the individual. The fact that everything from clothing to taking care of the children is defined: that the household chores and the duties at the farm, for example, are defined; that there is a whole series of jobs defined, is a distribution which constitutes the tradition. But if a particular job is done by a man or a woman at a certain point in time it does not mean that this person should be accused of acting badly but rather that it is acceptable to act freely according to the circumstances. I believe this is the case in my society, we are able to act freely. Women, for example, do not have to chop or transport wood. Nor are we under the obligation to go out to the fields everyday and sow. But if we want to do so we can, and if we want to we can also pick up a spade even though it is not one of our necessary duties. On the other hand, spinning and crocheting are a part of our work, but it is not a problem if a man decides to pick up a needle or put a few stitches in a shoulder bag to help out. When one does things which do not belong to his or her normal tasks the balance is not broken - not in the couple's relationship nor in the Arhuacan society.

All this clearly evidence that it is not possible for us to speak in isolation of indigenous woman without speaking of the entire community, of the men, of the children and elderly, and of all those who form our community. Separating women from this community would be to do things as they are done in the outside society, and we consider this to be artificial.

Women have many things in common, and I deeply believe in what we conceive of as tradition: that the woman is the mother of the land, and similar to Mother Earth, she is productive, gives refuge and warmth. This is what any woman does and she is thus of equal importance to the man in his true sense. The outside system imposes a divided society upon us, a society with distinct and clashing social classes, and this creates the problems. Not only women suffer when the system and its differentiations are imposed. Men and children are affected as well. I believe that the Arhuacan woman becomes a victim due to the system.

An Arhuacan woman will always become disoriented when she moves to the city, to an unfamiliar environment, to look for the privileges of the *wunachi* (white) society. This is because even though she may have the means, conditions and resources necessary to be like a Western woman, she will always be an indigenous woman. This is something one carries inside. Knowing that one's origin, one's father or mother are different, is something very profound, and I believe that attempting to reject it is the worst thing that can happen to someone. You will always be who you are even though you want to deny it. There is a spirit which makes each one of us different, think different, and the strength to continue being, to continue existing for millennia stems from the values of the Arhuacan culture and this continues to be the case today.

An Arhuacan woman is a victim when she gives in to the system. The system will use her for domestic service and will consider her a mere beggar because she has no money. She is a victim when her customs are taken away from her because a custom in which money is highly valued is imposed on her and she does not have any, because she has left a community where she is cared for by everyone for a hostile society where she is an individual and will have to face all the changes and new situations alone.

The same is true for men. An Arhuacan man who leaves behind his values and customs becomes a day labourer or servant, servile to those who have money for the desire of having money. This does not happen to an Arhuacan man who keeps his piece of land, who aspires to produce his sustenance himself and is not dependent on anyone. That is why the condition of the Arhuacan man and woman continues to be equal. With loss of their values comes the inability to make decisions. One becomes totally dependent on the system and this makes it impossible to choose to take only what we want, that which can serve us, from the system.

In the case of women who leave the community it is clear that women are more vulnerable than men. The system is based on strength, and men are more powerful, even though they continue to be beggars and remain excluded. The mere fact of starting out from a different identity, a different way of relating with one another, still remains an exclusion.

I believe that discrimination, rejection and intolerance to difference are a product of ignorance, lack of understanding; there is too much sophism and too little authenticity. Those in the majority society who understand indigenous values and our identity can give us their support. This continues to be very important, very necessary. But when it comes to making decisions and who should decide what, it should be indigenous women.

Women in the Arhuacan cosmovision

According to our *Ika* (Arhuacan) cosmovision women are:

- Earth (for our productive capacity, the source of life for all beings);
- Coca leaves (for the ability to communicate, as company to the Arhuacan male);
- Water (life-giving sustenance for all beings);
- Stars (the feminine of the Sun).

In our dual cosmovision women occupy the left side of all beings and in this way we complete them, in the same way as men do.

The principles of our culture are reflected upon in our cosmovision. In our culture the woman is always considered as Mother Earth, the mother who has the capacity to continue life, the capacity to make all things exist and be possible. And as it is said about the earth, that any seed can be planted and it will grow, the women too have the capacity to produce all things. Both good seeds and bad ones can be planted in the earth and both grow. Likewise, women can also produce wise persons or very bad persons. We have the capacity to give birth to all kinds of children: white, black and Indian. This capacity is similar to that of the earth. When this comparison is made it is clearly understood that the strength of the earth is the same as the woman's, and the great capacity possessed by the earth to remain, to permit and protect the continuity of life is ours. It also has the ability to destroy, for example, a volcano, which can create a catastrophe anywhere in the world. Women can cause good and evil as well.

Women are also considered to be water. Water is considered to be feminine. It is clear, transparent; it is necessary; it always has the same path and the same end: to nourish. Water is the veins of the earth. The sea is like the earth; it is also the mother, also female, and all that exists on the dry earth, this life, also exists in the sea.

For us, vegetation, trees, are the masculine part of nature. But there is one exception: the coca plant. Coca is feminine and that is why Arhuacan men always carry coca with them. It represents a way to communicate; it fulfils the social function of exchange. When two men greet one another they exchange coca leaves from their shoulder bags. This exchange of greetings is emotional and at the same time it is a sign of identity. It is clearly known that a man is Arhuacan by this coca greeting. If he is not carrying coca he is a man but a man from another culture - a non-Arhuacan. An Arhuacan man carries coca because it is his complement; it is the woman and just as he is always accompanied by coca he should always be accompanied by his wife. An Arhuacan man without coca and without a *poporo*[1] is incomplete. He does not represent Arhuacan dignity nor the adult maturity of a responsible person. If he is single *poporo* and coca are his partners. Coca is also a sign of spiritual communication, the capacity for analysis which *mamos*[2] and Arhuacans have. It is like a key and with this key a door can be opened to communicate and analyse.

I believe that when it is said that coca serves the ability to think, to produce more, as a stimulant, that this is not the case for the Taironas be they Kogi, Arhuacans or Arsarios. Many researchers and anthropologists have studied this issue but I believe that they have been very vague. They say that the Indians consume coca in order to endure the long workdays. But it is not that simple because we women never consume coca because it would be complementing woman with woman and this is not a union which serves the reproduction or development of the human species. It is now also said that coca produces cancer, but I've seen men who have consumed coca their entire life and still have all their teeth and are healthy, and women who have never consumed coca who have lost their teeth. For us, coca is cosmogonic and a fundamental part of the Arhuacan culture, like the land. For us, language is born of the territory; culture is based on territorial principles.

We consider it to be a privilege to be a part of a group which greatly values its culture. A true Arhuacan values all of the cultural principles mentioned above and considers women to be very important. But when these values are lost this appropriate and proper way of treating women is also lost. Considering these two aspects it is clear that special organisations to defend women's rights are not needed. Instead, women should work with men to defend our way of life, our cultural foundation. The most important thing is to defend our values and principles, these ways of being, and that children be educated in this way, that they continue being Arhuacan. The woman's role as educator and transmitter is essential for these values to be maintained.

The Arhuacan woman's daily life

The Arhuacan woman's daily life is very varied. We cannot speak of one day to explain what life and the women's duties are, because each day is different. An Arhuacan woman arises at 4.00 or 5.00 in the morning, but in many cases even at 3.00 if she needs to cook the food to be taken to those working in the fields. She begins the day by preparing the food and remains at home; and in many cases she is responsible for the children as well. If the children go to school she wakes them up early because they often live one hour away by foot from the school. She then prepares them to arrive on time.

Women are in charge of small animals around the house including raising hens, pigs and sometimes sheep. It is a job which she does not do alone; the children also help. We women work more with children than with adults. We also do all the housework: laundry and cleaning as well as spinning, crocheting and shearing sheep, although men often participate in this last task as well.

There are many different jobs; sometimes the wool has to be washed and sometimes it has to be dried. At other times one has to help harvest the different crops: corn, potatoes or *wandul* (beans) according to the time of the year. Harvesting is usually a collective activity in which the whole family participates: men and women, sons and daughters. There are some products which are not cultivated but gathered such as fruits (mangos, oranges, etc.). But with other products there is a collective and organised harvest such as with corn and coffee, because they are large harvests and include other tasks like storage and sale. Coffee, for example, has a long development process and women participate in this type of job.

Women are also in charge of watching over the completion of tasks by household members. Women usually have authority in the house in the sense that they give orders and organise the activity. They make sure that all of the members of the household fulfil their obligations. As the man is usually out of the house in the fields or with the animals, the woman is the one who remains at home and responds to the social life within the house. This is not to say that she is solely obligated to taking care of the children, because in our communities all older people feel responsible for the children around us. We worry about their health, appetite or clothing and we take care of them if they are alone because their mother or father is out.

Crocheting a shoulder bag. Photo: Leonor Zalabata

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Spinning is like spinning life

After completing our jobs we spin and knit with a crochet, this is a bit like leisure time. We entertain ourselves by crocheting a shoulder bag, making stitches and patterns, inventing. This is obligatory in the sense that if we don't no one else will, but we do not feel it to be an obligation but rather as the end of the workday. As we say it is the 'tail end of the task', of the day's tasks. And at the same time to crochet and spin are good customs, a good way of being.

To crochet and spin are very important for us. All these artistic tasks have deep roots in our thinking, in our culture. They have a deep significance.

Spinning, for example, is like spinning life. Patterns are spun and thoughts are spun, and I believe that this is life. When one spins one thinks about the life of what one is doing. While observing how the sun moves each day, the earth turns around the sun and the sun moves creating the day. The sun is father and the earth is mother and the spindle by turning represents this movement and that function that the earth has daily, the passage of the hours, to turn and turn. When we move the spindle we make the same movement as Mother Earth: she is always spinning; she is spinning life and in spinning life she is selecting. She is creating the thread of life, the thread of history and that history is spun by us with the spindle.

The yarn which we spin is used for many different things. This yarn is like the sun or the movement of the earth. It has the ability to provide everything: cold and warmth; light and darkness; the ability to develop any being; the ability to warm a stone so that it retains energy, a warmth around nature. Stones fulfil a vital function for us.

When we spin we think of what we are going to use this yarn of life for; this yarn of history: we use it to make shoulder bags, to make *tutusomas* or caps for the men so that the men can weave them; so that men can weave their own clothes. We think about these things.

After getting the yarn the men will, for example, weave their caps and while doing so they think of what the cap means to them: weaving it they build the snow-capped peaks of the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, our land, and when they wear it they know that they are wearing the snowy peaks of the Sierra.

On the shoulder bags we find the different crocheted patterns representing the art of man's thoughts as well as woman's thoughts.

We call each one by a different name. For example, *cunsama amia* refers to the thoughts of the woman and *cunsama cheiva* to the thoughts of the man. We make other patterns such as the *cambiru* which are the trees where shoulder bags and other objects are hung. We pattern the paths of the horses because our paths are all bridle paths. We pattern leaves, the leaves of plants. Art is part of the life we live, have, preserve and project. Today, for example, many patterns are introduced and many arts combined. An art is created by combining history, that is to say the basis and the roots, and the new by making some changes in our traditional designs which represent our cultural concepts of things.

For us, a shoulder bag is like a woman's womb where you can collect, have children and guard the seeds necessary for life. Valuable things are protected and carried in the shoulder bag which is why we all carry them: men, women and children. We barely take them off to eat and wash ourselves; above all, the men are never separated from them. Carrying the shoulder bag symbolises being accompanied by the maternal uterus, by the mother, and that is why the yarn is a single strand and the fabric as well. They are not separate strands of yarn but rather one strand which continues all the time with its three or four colours and is crocheted in a circular movement, like the circular movement of spinning and that of Mother Earth.

Between spinning and crocheting we feel that we have the basis of the Arhuacan woman's life, her main task. Different fibres are used: henequen or wool or cotton. And now there are women who enjoy using synthetic fibres in their work. But we are always at work spinning life. That is why we feel that Arhuacan women are the ones who maintain, preserve and develop the community life of the Arhuacan villages. But as in all things the participation of men is equally essential and necessary. The men extract the henequen from the plant, even though we do the rest of the work. The men do not spin the cotton nor the wool, but they weave their own clothing. There is always complementarity between men and women in all jobs. Men also weave the roof of the house which is made of straw and reed. And they make the wooden crate which is filled with mud to make walls. They have their own art for weaving; they weave the straw and reed in the barns of the houses and weave the walls of the *kankurwa* (hut) with sugar cane leaves.

The meaning of the shoulder bag

By crocheting the shoulder bag we are doing something deeply profound: crocheting life. For us, artistic manifestations are not shows to be put on but rather practices which we live by; that is to say concepts which are expressed in this way and which always accompany us. We gather our strength and we demonstrate it in our arts. Our life is our art. We practise it every day and we refer our life to it. I believe that a traditional Arhuacan woman always has a shoulder bag in her hands; she is always working on a shoulder bag.

Based on my own experience, one always has a thought, a dream when crocheting a shoulder bag. At first, one thinks of how to make the first knot to start connecting and then the stitches and then where to go in order to make the shoulder bag the right size. One is always occupied with these thoughts. When we make a shoulder bag we think about who it is for. It is a very special event when you make a shoulder bag for your husband or son or for someone to whom you want to show a lot of love and happiness. You think about the pattern according to the person. You think about something that fits in with the person, which has the appropriate texture, colours and pattern for the person. One thinks of all this and continues crocheting and crocheting until the combinations of colours for the particular person is achieved. Each shoulder bag is essential and marked by anxiety, aspirations and dreams.

This is the importance of the shoulder bag and this was the concept of crocheting it and giving it as a present. Earlier, shoulder bags were not sold. Today, it is necessary to sell them; the commercial spirit has led us to this point. But a shoulder bag made to be sold has no spirit; it lacks the message it has when it is made with a specific person in mind. Thinking of a pattern, deciding which pattern to make use of is fun. You pick your brain looking for the appropriate pattern and this is anxiety, a little bit of emotion, some delicacy and some love; for all who have to carry the shoulder bag all the time the fabric is the key element. All the women are making crochet and are thinking; it is like creating a spiritual attitude when one is crocheting a shoulder bag. I believe that when Arhuacan women are crocheting we are thinking and are in a spiritual turn of mind to do something good; to do the best for the person the shoulder bag is intended for.

Sometimes it seems that shoulder bags are crocheted for the sake of crocheting. But I believe that when the majority of traditional women are crocheting they have a spiritual feeling that they give to the shoulder bag, and of which the shoulder bag is a manifestation. This spiritual feeling is there all the time, day and night, depending on the shoulder bag, and this spiritual availability created in this activity is what makes the Arhuacan woman a distinct person. Logically enough there are exceptions but I believe that crocheting and spinning give a tonality to people, a tonality like that of the shoulder bags themselves. Many things as well as a special availability develop in this way.

The same takes place with the artistic activities of men, for example, when they weave their caps, as mentioned above, or when they weave their clothes. The men sit together and talk about weaving or whatever else they may be making: a canoe, wooden objects, etc. And a desire is created to want to see how the objects look and to ensure that they come out well. We say that the object will turn out according to the way of thinking. If the way of thinking is not steady, the objects will be crooked. If the way of thinking is straight, the objects will be as well. The objects will come out in one way or another depending on the moment in time.

This way of being when we are crocheting or spinning, this way of thinking and developing our thoughts in these activities is threatened at this time. From my own experience I believe that these things are being threatened. A traditional Arhuacan woman who has not thought about school, who does not know how to read and write, for example, is someone who has a greater spiritual inclination for these things. When you start school and begin to do different types of tasks I believe that one becomes distanced from this spiritual disposition to make a shoulder bag. One loses the ability to invest the necessary amount of time. Thus one becomes a little more materialistic, a little more worried about other issues and even more so if one enters into politics. There are, consequently, other worries of a much more urgent nature than thinking about the next pattern to make for a shoulder bag even though as an Arhuacan woman I have to enter into this way of thinking. But the ability to continually be involved in this is almost impossible.

As a result, changes are produced. I do not know if they are for the good or the bad, but they do change things. I cannot determine if it is an advantage or disadvantage if the current situation of a traditional Arhuacan is marked by a spiritual disposition or a slight leaning towards the material, because there are many necessities which continue to arise: sicknesses and problems created by the system. It is so strong that the values of the minority cultures are demolished. They are two slightly different fields, but if all the women dedicated themselves to political life, who would take care of everything else? Men maintain traditions as well, but the tasks are distributed. Culture is our politics and if it were to be lost, what would happen? A woman who crochets and spins is an Arhuacan woman; she is a different woman, spiritually dedicated to a function which belongs to us, which is the foundation of our life, and she understands life in this way, as a strand of yarn.

Women are realistic decision-makers

Having political power in our society does not also mean having economic power. For a traditional Arhuacan, having political power is to have the power of wisdom. He or she is considered to be an important authority not for what they have or could have but for what they know. In Western society one meets people who have no knowledge, no culture, but the mere fact that they have significant resources, capital, allow them the possibility to achieve the level of the learned - the total opposite of the situation in Arhuacan society.

When there is an indigenous woman who has the ability to live together with a spiritual leader, a *mamo*, to be with him, and to contribute with a human, spiritual or political dimension, it is considered to be of great value for him to live with this woman who provides him with the strength to develop in this way. A traditional Arhuacan man would never make a decision without relying on his wife. The wives of the mamos contribute the information and balance so that the mamo can explain, determine; they play an extremely important role.

We live in an environment in which there is an economic, political and social equality even though someone has the authority or has special knowledge. This does not signify that someone else cannot have this power insofar as they develop. What happens is that we cannot fill those functions which do not help us develop or which we are not familiar with. And I believe that in this there is no significant distinction between Arhuacan men and women. That is to say, we have the same conditions and, therefore, we can carry out many jobs.

The fact that a woman participates or does not participate in the decision-making process depends on two factors. On the one hand, it is a question of having elaborated an understanding and of having had the opportunity to apply it, to gain experience. On the other hand, it also depends on one liking to do these types of things. I am sure that many women would prefer to remain as they are, not out of conformity but consciousness. When considering the indigenous communities it is necessary to understand how the people think culturally and see if this is a real social dynamic, that it exists, or if it is merely a series of outside attitudes which came later.

Traditionally, we - men and women - have some distinct conditions which allow us to take on different types of tasks. Among us there are those who are made to think. According to our beliefs we believe that there are people who come from an origin which imparts wisdom, and all of the generations which come from this origin possess the ability to think. Others have, for example, the ability for economic production, the ability to work; they are effective workers and obtain the desired results. There are still others dedicated to the people's spiritual life. For them this is the most important; it is what they know and can do. I do not believe that in our case there can be mention of different social classes.

There also exists a tendency, whose cultural foundation I cannot clearly define, by which there are people among us who are recognised as lifelong authorities. That means they do not have a position by name but rather they are respected by all throughout their life because they are considered to be wise. This is the case with many women.

There has been much active participation by many women. These include Salomé Chaparro, Dionisia Alfaro and others who due to circumstances of the Mission or because we had to go abroad have had to make decisions, even though later we returned to our own community, our own traditions. And by experiencing the outside world we have realised that outside there are some set values but that we have our own.

It is often considered to be very important that people are always active, that they are always talking, making decisions. But for us, this is not so important. Instead, it is important to be strong, to be powerful at the right moment and not to always want to exercise authority, to be energetic and precise. It is not necessary to be this way at all times but rather at the times in which it is necessary to defend the peoples' values. The leader does not create, does not invent; his or her job is to pass on what is lived and decided in the community. The leaders who do not have an internal role in the community and who try to adapt external systems are mistaken.

The role of the Arhuacan woman is very important, not only for specific individuals but in general. This is because our political values are in our cultural values; our culture is our politics and they are an integral part of our culture. When cultural values are lost there are no longer political values. Decision-making should be a true community practice and not an individual one. Women bring more realism to this process because we are more realistic. In order to understand our participation in the decision-making process there must be an interpretation and analysis of this role from the point of view of our own culture, our values, not from outside concepts. Women usually contribute this realistic, practical point of view to the decision-making process and this contribution, even though it often seems to focus on small points, is vital.

Notes

[1] A calabash used for carrying the chalk used together with coca leaves.

[2] A *mamo* is a spiritual leader.

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MAORI WOMEN AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

by Elizabeth McKinley

Introduction[1]

In 1990, Aotearoa[2] New Zealand held celebrations for our supposed sesquicentennary (150 years) but this time represents only approximately 15 per cent of our known demographic history. By 1990, Aotearoa New Zealand had been lived on by Maori for over one thousand years. The mid to late eighteenth century brought the first recorded European contact with Aotearoa New Zealand through the explorers Abel Tasman and James Cook 'discovering' the country, sealers and whalers fishing the waters off the coastline, followed by missionaries in 1814. Today the population consists mainly of Pakeha (New Zealanders of European descent) and Maori, the indigenous group. There are other groups that have immigrated in recent times, of which the largest numbers are those from other South Pacific islands.

In 1840 Aotearoa New Zealand became a colony of Britain with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi between the Queen of England and Maori chiefs[3]. For Maori, the Treaty recognised that in exchange for settlement rights for British settlers, their natural rights as 'tangata whenua' (original occupants) would be respected and upheld. For British settlers, the Treaty allowed them to emigrate peacefully to New Zealand under the British flag. However, by as early as 1860, the settlers began to use the law and coercive force to separate Maori from resources, and particularly our land (see e.g. Alan Ward 1995).

The Treaty is seen by Maori as an important founding document and as such it features prominently in our current developments. There are three articles in the Treaty of Waitangi. Article 2 is the one invoked with respect to natural resources where it states:

> *... the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their lands and estates, forests, fisheries, and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess ...*

Maori debate on the Treaty has revolved around two themes. The first is sovereignty which relates to the right of Maori to exercise authority over our own resources and people in our own way, and the second is concerning our rights which can only be extinguished by our explicit consent and our active participation in this extinction. In short, the Treaty is seen to be about self-determination. In the last twenty years the debate over resources has focused on the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal. In brief, this is a body of people who have been authorised to hear claims by Maori against the Crown for breaches of the Treaty. The Tribunal has no legal jurisdiction and can only make recommendations to the Crown, and since 1993 it cannot recommend the return of privately owned land to settle grievance claims. However, the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal has seen some landmark decisions in the recognition of Maori Treaty rights as guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi as shall be seen in the examples later in the paper.

In this paper I address the situation Maori find themselves in today. Firstly I will briefly cover our current circumstances in relation to social and economic well-being. This will be followed by a description of our relationship to 'nature'. Then taking a lead from this espoused position, I will explore two examples of natural resource development being led by Maori women. In this way, I hope to indicate how Maori women are working to ensure the protection and development of our culture and lifestyle with respect to natural resources. These examples will also give some idea of the sort of development that we are aiming at in these times. Lastly, I will offer some ideas on how I think 'Western' nations can contribute.

Background to social and economic positioning

At the time of initial European contact (around 1769) it has been estimated that New Zealand's population consisted of 100 000 Maori. By the late nineteenth century (1890s), due mainly to diseases such as typhoid, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, measles, etc, the Maori population numbered just 40,000. Today our total population is around three and a half million people. Maori represent approximately 13 per cent of the total population[4]. Overall the Maori population is young. Life expectancy is about 6 years lower for Maori than for Pakeha. The major factors for different life expectancy are diabetes, cot death, cancer (particularly lung cancer for Maori women), respiratory diseases, accidents (e.g. suicide, homicide, motor vehicle crashes, particularly for young Maori men) and rheumatic heart disease.

Maori began moving from the rural areas to the cities following World War II. Today approximately 81 per cent of Maori live in urban areas. This has brought with it a number of issues to do with land alienation, the breakdown of extended families which were the primary means of support for Maori women. From a group and family oriented social structure (2-3 generations in one household), urbanisation has brought an emphasis on nuclear families (1 or 2 parents and children). A more positive aspect about this move is the development of non-tribal based groups in cities. This is an adaptation of the traditional tribal groupings.

Educationally there remains a considerable gap between the attainment of Maori and non-Maori school leavers at all levels. In employment, the positive aspects are that Maori have moved into a wider range of jobs (including self-employed), and the incomes of Maori women have improved on average compared to non-Maori women while still being under-represented in the top income quartile. However, Maori, and particularly the younger people, are still over-represented in industries and occupations that have been affected by the recession. Maori men continue to be concentrated in manufacturing industries, and Maori women in the service sectors. The negative aspects of employment statistics for Maori population is unemployment. Currently (1996) 19.4 per cent of the Maori working population are unemployed (males 19.6 per cent, females 19.2 per cent), compared to 20.7 per cent of the Pacific Island population (males 24.9 per cent, females 15.3 per cent), and 5.6 per cent for Pakeha (males 5.7 per cent, females 5.3 per cent). We are over-represented in income support payments such as the domestic purposes benefit and unemployment benefit, and under-represented in the national superannuation (we die sooner).

Maori women are twice as likely to experience infant mortality, have limited educational achievement, low employment prospects, have ill-health from an early age, the highest rates of lung cancer and bowel cancer in the world, and are more likely to be lone parents. In short, Maori women tend to be disadvantaged in employment, income, education and housing - all factors that have a major effect on the life prospects of family members and particularly children. Teenage Maori girls have one of the highest suicide rates and pregnancy rates in the world. While one could view the statistics as not being good, Maori women have been leaders in many spheres including land, education, language, and social issues and have provided strong role models for men and women alike.

Relationship with nature

Aotearoa New Zealand is relatively isolated with a temperate climate and a very large number of flora and fauna found nowhere else in the world. We have no indigenous terrestrial mammals and a large number of flightless or semi-flightless bird populations. The native bush is very thick due to good rainfall, and the majority of our indigenous trees and shrubs are evergreen. Our landscape varies from mountain ranges to broad fertile valleys, and from volcanic plateaux and geothermal activity to glaciers and fjords.

We are a land based people. By that I mean the land is extremely important to us. The best indicator of this is perhaps in our language when we refer to ourselves as a group as *tangata whenua* literally meaning 'people of the land'. Land is everything in a Maori world view. It also emphasises the common experience of Maori, whatever our tribal origins, and provides a base for collective political action. Land alienation is seen as the key to explaining current disadvantages for Maori, both materially and spiritually. In taking our land, the colonists last century removed not only our economic base but also our identity.

There are two fundamental aspects to a Maori world view - genealogy (*whakapapa*) and personification of natural phenomena (Roberts et al. 1993). Complex genealogical constructs exist that include everything. Inanimate and animate objects have their genealogy and all things are ultimately linked to the supernatural and in particular *Papatuanuku*, our Mother Earth. The supernatural and the natural are linked and are part of a unified whole. Important in this view is that humans are seen as part of nature and belong with all other things. Hence, the relationship between Maori and land is a familial relationship and one of guardianship (*kaitiakitanga*). The loss of land has been devastating for Maori. It has also caused traditional relationships with the environment to be seriously impaired. Today, Maori struggle to regain the land and to obtain recognition of our traditional customs and values relating to the management of all resources, including environmental.

In Maori world views, narratives of powerful women abound. Of particular significance is the relationship between women, language and land. A division by sex does not occur in the language as the pronouns are gender-neutral as are our traditional Maori names. The importance of women is expressed through proverbs (*whakatauaki)* and language. For example, women are described as *whare tangata* (the house of humanity); *whenua* means both 'land' and 'afterbirth'; and *hapu* means both 'pregnant' and a large kinship group. The earth is Papatuanuku, the ancestress of all Maori. We have a common saying '*He wahine, he whenua, e ngaro ai te tangata*' meaning 'Without women and land people are lost' referring to the essential nourishing roles that women and land occupy without which humanity would be lost. This connection between women and land is important as the land is of paramount significance to Maori socially, culturally, spiritually, politically and economically. In addition, Maori women were never regarded as chattels or possessions, they retained their own names upon marriage, and they dressed in similar garments to men to carry out, more often than not, similar work. Sub-tribes (*hapu*) and meeting houses (*whare tupuna*) are also named after women.

I want to turn now to two examples that illustrate the significance of the role played by Maori women in the protection of our resources. These examples also speak about the development and protection extended to our culture and lifestyle by Maori women. And lastly, it speaks of some of the kinds of change we seek in this period of globalisation. The first example - the issue of cultural and intellectual property - is of growing concern among indigenous peoples world-wide. The second is the revitalisation of the language through immersion schooling. Language is the key in the ability of any group to not only have particular perspectives pertaining to that group, but also for the perspectives to be maintained as different and developed as something other than that offered by prevalent 'Western' views of the world.

Example One - The Waitangi Tribunal Claim 262 relating to flora and fauna

For indigenous peoples, the loss of their cultural and intellectual property is linked to colonialist processes. Historically, the alienation of these properties has followed from our political marginalisation and subsequent inability to retain control over their use and disposal. This links the protection of cultural and intellectual properties to the realisation of our right to self-determination. The process involves the establishment of the right to maintain our own models of knowledge ownership.

In the 1980s when an ethnobotanical garden was being established in the Auckland region, it was discovered that traditional strains of *kumara* (a sweet potato) that were once grown by our old people could no longer be found in Aotearoa New Zealand. No one seemed to know what had happened to them until a research institute in Japan contacted Maori involved with the development to say they had the seed. The Maori group then approached the government for funding but were refused. Eventually, a group of Maori went to Japan to bring back the seed and plant it once again in our gardens. This incident, along with the TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement, and a steady growing unease about the use of Maori icons in a growing tourist and trading market brought about the lodging of the Wai 262 claim with the Waitangi Tribunal. Both the Kumara expedition and the Wai 262 claim were instigated by Maori women.

What are the problems?

The Wai 262 claim is critical of the Crown's consultation process regarding intellectual and cultural property rights, and identifies problems with the operation of the intellectual property laws in Aotearoa New Zealand and consequently world-wide. The expropriation of indigenous knowledge forms is not new. The United Nations Economic and Social Council (1992) has identified three categories of indigenous intellectual property which have been subjected to expropriation:

1. The 'cultural forms' e.g. traditions, folklore, arts
2. Scientific knowledge e.g. medicinal plants
3. Physical resources within their territories

Central to these processes is that what is possessed by indigenous peoples is not 'owned' in any proper sense, but exists in the public domain. That is, it belongs to all humanity. On this basis it has been considered that indigenous 'knowledge objects' may be freely 'acquired', removed from the context in which they are legitimately controlled, and put to alien and uses not acceptable to indigenous people.

From a Maori perspective, the problems in Aotearoa New Zealand arise from a failure by government to recognise and embrace Maori ownership rights (McNeill 1995). Maori groups see these rights as:

1. Tangible property rights - i.e. rights to natural resources in recognition that Maori have the *kaitiaki* or management and ownership rights to the tangible property rights of certain natural resources which together with the 'value added know-how' become intellectual property rights, e.g. *kumara* (sweet potato), *tuatara* (a native species of reptile), *kereru* (wood pigeon), *pupu harakeke* (flax);
2. Traditional knowledge rights - i.e. traditional knowledge, innovations and practices which are sourced in Maori custom and which have been guaranteed under Article 2 of the Treaty of Waitangi, e.g. traditional Maori medicine;
3. Biodiversity rights;
4. Intellectual property rights - i.e. the entitlement to receive a benefit from any commercial development.

There is a growing recognition and exploitation in the value of indigenous knowledge. This is knowledge which has been used to develop and farm useful plant species, or to utilise the medicinal properties of those that are naturally occurring. The knowledge is often used directly by researchers in the search for new drugs. Elizabetsky (1991) argues that such knowledge facilitates the development of new drugs through enhancing plant selection; by providing 'leads' from traditional use that allow for narrowing the pharmacological study; and by providing 'leads' from traditional modes of preparation that provide clues to active chemical compounds. While we may see that indigenous knowledge has an intrinsic value for pharmaceutical companies, the value cannot be captured by the indigenous peoples themselves.

The biggest problem with Western intellectual property law, as it impacts on indigenous peoples, is that it fails to recognise or embrace indigenous forms of knowledge. In addition, indigenous peoples are often denied the benefit from the commercialisation of their knowledge, and their knowledge and resources are often drawn by the operation of the law into inappropriate contexts. The most clear example of this is the patenting of life forms. In the case of the Human Genome Diversity Project, it represents not only economic exploitation but an unwelcome encroachment into non-economic domains.

Addressing the issues

Responses to the issues outlined above are currently happening in a number of different contexts. Generally there is a call for different models for the better management of development projects impinging on indigenous peoples. The models proposed tend to be based around notions of consultation, the call for the inclusion of local peoples in the planning and execution of commercial enterprises involving various resources, and extending the coverage of existing intellectual property structures to better accommodate the needs and aspirations of indigenous peoples. At the same time, indigenous peoples themselves are making some very clear statements about what they consider necessary for the protection of their cultural and intellectual properties.

Exploitation of knowledge resources has been predicated on the ability of the dominant groups to define indigenous cultural and intellectual properties on their behalf. In doing so the dominant groups have been allowed to determine how they are to be used, for what purposes, and under what circumstances (if at all) they are to be protected. Indigenous peoples seek to reverse this situation so they get to determine these things with respect to their knowledge. At the same time, the protection of these knowledge resources are linked to a recognition and realisation of the right to self-determination.

In New Zealand the main avenue through which these aspects are being addressed is the Treaty of Waitangi. With respect to scientific knowledge and biodiversity, early Maori intervention to be granted input into early changes of statutes relating to patents and intellectual property rights had failed. The only redress Maori had was to lodge a claim with the Waitangi Tribunal so the issues would be clearly spelt out for the Crown. A claim was lodged with the Waitangi Tribunal in 1990 contesting the ownership of Aotearoa New Zealand's flora and fauna. The hearing for this claim began on 15 September, 1997 and a judgement has yet to be written. The claim seeks both compensation for alienated flora and fauna and Crown recognition of Maori sovereign rights to the control of such.

The claim identifies historic breaches of Article 2 of the Treaty of Waitangi which have resulted in the loss of tribal ownership of and control over culturally valued species of flora and fauna. Fundamentally, this loss has been linked to the undermining of Maori authority and consequently of our ability to exercise guardianship over these species. For example, the *tuatara* reptile has been lost to iwi (tribal grouping) as a result of processes of land alienation, and delegation of resource management responsibilities to government departments. It also details how the ongoing process of the Crown and its agents selling, disposing and exporting genetic resources of the land. For example, since 1986 the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research of New Zealand (DSIR) and the National Institute of Agricultural Research in France have used the *puawananga* (clematis plant) for the focus of genetic studies. There are a number of other examples including the return of the *kumara* (sweet potato) and the Polynesian rat (Roberts 1993).

The protection of traditional Maori knowledge is an important issue for Maori. Embodied in this knowledge are the fundamental socio-economic elements of Maori customs, and alienation or inappropriate use of this knowledge is seen as threatening the integrity of Maori custom. Traditional Maori knowledge is also seen as a productive asset able to be used to achieve social and commercial development for Maori.

Example Two - Language as a natural resource

One of the greatest natural resources anyone can have must be their children. We want our children to go forth in the world strong in their identity and cultural traditions and knowledgeable about their environment. Like many other colonised peoples, the arrival of the missionaries in the early 1800s, and the settlers around 1840, brought with it policies of government that would contribute heavily towards a decline in the use of Maori language. The Native Schools Act 1867 and the 1871 Native Schools Amendment Act set up an English-only stance for Maori education.

Today New Zealand is faced with a situation where only approximately 50,000 people are fluent in Maori language (about 12 per cent of the Maori population). The pool of native speakers of Maori has radically diminished in size and most of them are over sixty. With Maori health statistics as they are, it can be predicted that the number of native speakers will decline at a very fast rate. As stated previously, language encompasses a whole way of looking at the world and the loss of one's language means you lose more than the word you use to communicate. The revitalisation of our language has been a consuming issue for Maori, and particularly Maori women, in the last two decades.

In 1981, at a meeting held in Wellington, the perilous state of the Maori language was raised to be discussed. Research in the late 1970s had predicted the imminent death of the Maori language. This led to a commitment on the part of the people at the meeting to ensure the implementation of measures that would help bring back the Maori language from the brink of extinction. This meeting led to the establishment of Nga Kohanga Reo (literally meaning 'language nests' they are Maori language immersion pre-schools). On April 29, 1986 there was another important event in language revitalisation. On this day the Waitangi Tribunal announced its findings to a claim lodged against the Crown by Nga Kaiwhakapumau i te Reo Incorporated Society over the Maori language. In clause 6.3.8 the findings state:

> *The education system in New Zealand is operating unsuccessfully because too many Maori children are not reaching an acceptable standard of education. For some reason they do not or cannot take full advantage of it. Their language is not adequately protected and their scholastic achievements fall far short of what they should be.*

In addition, the tribunal made it clear that the education system as it operated was in direct contravention of the Treaty of Waitangi which guaranteed the right to protection of 'all valued customs and possessions' (ibidem). The outcome from this claim was the passing into law of The Maori Language Act 1987. The act contains three significant provisions:

1. Maori was declared to be an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand;
2. Maori was permitted to be used in legal proceedings;
3. The Maori Language Commission was established[5]

Both of these events recognise that the education system and schools play a central part in the revitalisation of the Maori language. Maori people generally also recognise the role of schools in this endeavour.

Kohanga Reo are total-immersion Maori language pre-schools, initiated and controlled by Maori communities and now funded by the state. *Kohanga Reo* is an initiative based on the total immersion of Maori children in Maori language and values from birth. The programme is made available largely through a network of Maori early childhood *whanau* (extended family) centres. These have developed rapidly since the first was established in 1981 and now 44 per cent of Maori attending pre-school choose to attend a *kohanga reo*. From here came the establishment of total immersion primary (*kura kaupapa* schools) and secondary schools and tertiary institutes.

Kura kaupapa Maori and Kohanga Reo are driven by cultural imperatives, namely language. Maori language is used to validate Maori identity by confirming, legitimising and reproducing Maori cultural values, beliefs, resources and practices. All these things are essential if Maori are to keep 'Maori perspectives' of nature and the world generally for language must always be the basis.

Conclusion

In the last two decades there has been an increase in statutory mention of Treaty principles and Maori perspectives. It might be argued that while the law has been both destructive and neglectful of Maori in the past, Maori perspectives are now being incorporated into the law and that this must surely lead to improvement. This view is simplistic. As resources, including land, are being returned and some limited recognition is being returned through legal channels, the fact is that Maori women as an identifiable group with particularly pressing needs have remained virtually invisible. For example, there is one Maori director in each of our 15 Crown Health Enterprises but only two of them are women. Women are still largely absent from consultative and advisory bodies set up by the Crown to provide Maori input into decision-making processes. There are no Maori women in the Ministry of Education's Maori Education division. The continued determination of the Crown to negotiate with Maori men while ignoring Maori women, 157 years after the signing of the Treaty, is the grievance of a claim recently lodged against the Crown before the Waitangi Tribunal. Lodged in July 1993, the Particulars of Urgent Claim (paragraph h) allege that:

> *The Crown's actions and policies have been inconsistent with its obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi to protect and ensure the 'rangatiratanga'*[6] *of Maori women as individuals and members and leaders of tribes and families. These actions and policies have resulted in an undermining of Maori women so that their status as 'rangatira'*[7] *has been expropriated due to the Crown's failure to accord Maori women status and power within the political, social and economic structures it has created. The Crown continues to perpetuate this attitude of no value in Maori women.*

Sadly, Maori men have taken much of this on board as well. While legal redress may fix some things, more work will need to be done on deep seated attitudes prevalent in both Pakeha and Maori societies.

Women, both Maori and Pakeha, must now deal with gender inequality perpetuated under many guises in our society. It may be assumed that Maori women's interests are best served by joining forces with Pakeha feminists. However, while such a movement is relevant for all of us our struggle as Maori women is our own struggle. As Maori women we have to deal with the 'colour' and cultural specificity of patriarchy. Perhaps the most debilitating legacy of colonialism for Maori women is the effect it has had on our perceptions of ourselves. Female leadership roles did not end with colonisation. Maori women have been at the forefront of Treaty, language and social issues and will continue to be so for the next century or more.

Notes

[1] The article is based on a paper presented at a seminar on *Natural Resources Management Amongst Indigenous Peoples - seen in a Gender Perspective* organised by The International Committee of the Danish Women's Society in Ålborg, Denmark, on 4 October 1997.

[2] A Maori name given to New Zealand.

[3] It is interesting to note that the two versions (one in Maori and the other in English) differ quite markedly - an inevitable result perhaps from two groups of people who came from two different worlds.

[4] All statistics come from Ian Pool 1991.

[5] The Language Commission is a government funded body that is responsible for Maori language development.

[6] Chieftainship

[7] Chief

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CHAPTER 2

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CHANGING GENDER ROLES

Article 36 of the Beijing Declaration

> *That indigenous customary laws and justice systems which are supportive of women victims of violence be recognised and reinforced. That indigenous laws, customs, and traditions which are discriminatory to women be eradicated.*

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES, HEALTHY WOMEN: SOCIETY AND GENDER IN THE ANDES

by Wara Alderete

The Western lifestyle, so prominent in urban environments, impacts not only the sphere of material production and reproduction of indigenous communities around the globe; it also weakens the systems of beliefs and the set of social relations that constitute the basis of indigenous ways of life. Gender roles and relations, in particular, have been deeply influenced by the imposition of the beliefs and norms of the colonisers. Thus, among the many tasks involved in rebuilding indigenous communities, an examination of our traditional forms of gender, community and family relations must be undertaken.

The present examination entails a look at the practices of everyday life of both rural and urban Indian families in the province of Jujuy, Argentina. The purpose of this examination is to sort out elements of our traditional beliefs from those that have been imposed by colonisers. As indigenous women and men, the task is to reconstruct a gender perspective that is in accord with that of our ancestors and that can contribute to the creation of harmonious social environments and collective well being.

The province of Jujuy constitutes a cultural and geographical unit with the Andean regions of Bolivia, Peru and Chile. The majority of the population is indigenous and share the general cultural characteristics of the Quechua-Aymara tradition. Originally, although having overall commonalities, a diversity of localised cultural enclaves existed (Tilcaras, Humahuacas, etc.). At the present time, they are collectively referred to as *Kollas*. Andean people are the predominant population in the highlands (Puna) and mountain valleys (Quebrada). Estimates of the Kolla population in the province date from the 1980s and range from 180,000 to 275,000 (Dugoujon et al. 1989). This represents about 54 per cent of the total population of the province and about 70 per cent of the estimated indigenous population in the country.

Historical background

The economic and social structures in the province of Jujuy were shaped since the arrival of the Spanish by colonial and neo-colonial relationships. Mechanisms of domination, disarticulation of traditional forms of life and assimilatory policies interplayed with an array of tactics of cultural persistence. This dynamic has dominated and continues to dominate indigenous-Western social relations. The articulation of the original inhabitants with the eurocentric dominant society took different forms at different stages in history. However, a common thread runs from the moment of the first contact to the present time. This is the appropriation of native lands and, concurrently, the indigenous struggle for the recognition of ancestral territorial rights. Indigenous resistance persisted throughout history, whether in the form of violent confrontations, legal recourse or pacific marches (Paz 1989). European or metropolitan domination of the indigenous population in Jujuy responded to global and national political and economic interests.

Capitalist formation in Jujuy was based, to a large extent, on the burgeoning of sugar-cane industry in the late 19th century. The establishments of plantations and *ingenios* (sugar mills) marked an icon in the history of the articulation of the native peoples of Puna and Quebrada, with a capitalist market economy.

In Jujuy a strong migratory pressure is exerted over the indigenous population. This pressure takes the form of direct and indirect, explicit and implicit, cultural and economic mechanisms of manipulation (Gobierno de la Provincia de Jujuy 1986). The demographic profile of the province has been characterised in modern times by a rural-urban migration flow that fuelled the labour market. Indigenous people from rural communities in the highlands converge on the city of San Salvador de Jujuy, site of the provincial government administration, and to the proximal industrial centres.

This drain of human resources greatly impacts rural communities. Food and crafts production falls as labour is withdrawn from work at crucial points in the agricultural cycle. Meanwhile, extremely low wages are paid in the plantations and their subsidiary industries. Workers usually spend their salary on overpriced commodities that are, in many cases, sold by the company. A cycle of permanent migration and poverty is generated. Migration from the small town and rural traditional strongholds to the industrial centres is in part induced by the prospect of improving the quality of life and enjoying the benefits of urban life. The desire of betterment in material respects has been mentioned as a thriving force since early migration studies (Gilbert 1994). Improved chances of infant survival and increased accessibility to health services and to sanitation infrastructure are some of the expected outcomes of urban dwelling. Despite these hopes, the urban experience for most of the rural-urban migrants of Jujuy entails a life in shanty towns with bleak prospects of change. While some migrants continue to work in the *zafra* (sugar-cane harvest) others settle in the main cities. There, employment for those without special skills, Western education or capital is low paying and undependable. Labour laws are seldom enforced. A sense of vulnerability permeates the daily life of poor migrant families.

Although men are more likely to migrate outside of the province into larger urban and industrial centres, women are the majority of intra-provincial migrants. Women are paid less than men in both the city and the plantations, despite providing a major input in the production process. In the cities Indian women and girls seek employment as maids. They often work under highly exploitative conditions and they are also more likely than men to be hired in the lowest ranking government and service jobs. On the plantations their work consists in trimming sugar cane leaves, but only their husbands are paid. On the tobacco farms, women who work sorting and pooling leaves are paid less than men who harvest. Children too are hired in the tobacco harvest and earn nothing, or less than women.

The Andean cosmovision

Gender: the household as a reflection of the universe.

The concept of the complementarity of the opposites is a central tenant of the Andean world view. Andean people understand the cosmos, the universe and the generation and perpetuation of life in terms of opposite forces that interact complementing each other, rather that becoming antagonistic. Thus, all the elements of nature are embodied with oppositional interacting attributes. Female-male dualism is not confined to the human condition:

> *Andean people perceive nature and culture in terms of opposite entities symbolically sexuated. For example, the mountains and the Puna are male, while the land, the 'pampas' (plains) and the valleys are female. Also in the mythological realm, the Sun, the spirits of certain mountains... are male, while the Moon, 'Pacha Mama' (Mother Earth), the spirits of other mountains .. are female. Among Andean produces, potato is 'warmi' (female) and corn is 'chacha' (male). In the same manner, in the native music there are certain instruments which are male, and others are female. Even the colours and the numbers are classified according to this same principle* (Montes Ruiz 1968).

Matter and spirit are complementary attributes that exist in all elements of nature, including human beings; so are the dual representations of gender: male and female. Just as the social organisation of the ayllu, divided in halves, high and low (*hanan/urin*, *urcu/uma*), reflects the oppositional and complementary character of the Andean cosmos, the human couple is a mirror of the universe. In the words of a *yatiri*, an Andean healer:

> *We are always dual. Also, for us in the spiritual part, there are women priests, women who can read coca, women healers. That is why I say it is dual.*

Regarding the gender based division of labour, Murra (1975) claims that in practice the sexual specificity of different occupations was not very rigid. For example, skills in spinning wool and weaving were acquired since childhood by both boys and girls. At the present time, weaving, mainly a woman's chore in Western societies, is still commonly performed by both women and men. Adherence to the concept of dualism and complementarity requires the presence of male and female elements in all activities of life. Therefore, both women and men participate in the seeding of the land, the collection of crops, in propitiatory ceremonies, in barter activities and in the overall social and spiritual life of the community.

To identify Andean cultural constructs, it is necessary to peel off the layers of norms imprinted by colonial relations. In individual interviews, as well as through collective declarations, contemporary Andean women have denounced machismo as a widespread cultural trait among males (Alderete 1992). However, they trace the inception of this phenomena to the patriarchal social order and Christian moral values imposed by the Spanish colonisation. On the other hand, gender complementarity is one of the pillars of the Andean cosmovision. Andean women have based their claims of equality with males by reinforcing, for example, the understanding that Andean people have of their origins. In Andean mythology the founding parents Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo are said to have emerged from lake Titicaca, both together and at the same time. Both are equally gifted and skilled and they have gone onto the world to spread their teachings among their children.

Gender relations, as every aspect of life, suffered a tremendous impact under Spanish rule. Besides spreading the Christian doctrine's teachings of women's inferiority, Spanish rulers raped Indian women and made them their servants (Silverblatt 1987). On the other hand, while Indian males in general were also subdued into forced labour, those perceived to be of a higher status were selectively granted

Landscape from the province of Jujuy. Photo: Wara Alderete

certain attributes of power. These attributes consisted, for example, in participation in the social life of the colonies. These Indian men were granted permission to be administrators of territories or resources. Mestizo and Indian males such as Garcilaso de la Vega were even granted the prerogative of telling the colonial history. Thus, Spanish rule impacted Indian women differentially than it did men. It abolished matrilineal access and use of land, as well as women's inheritance of livestock. Similarly, women's social and spiritual leadership, common in the Andean region, was banned with more severity than male's leadership roles.

According to chronicles and present day testimonies, traditional Andean courtship, marriage and sexuality are devoid of the concept of sin. Andean beliefs and practices clash with Christian guilt-based beliefs. Initiation of courtship, for example, is not exclusively a male prerogative. 'A *coyita* (Kolla woman) of restless skirts chooses a man and sings a *copla* to him', says Paleari (1992) as he describes the customs of courtship during the Manca Fiesta (regional barter market). He states that on those occasions 'amorous courtship will always be a feminine prerogative'. A society that reveres the fertility of the land and of the creatures of nature, a society that reveres

Pachamama as the female source of life and the centre of their spiritual life, could not but value women's fertility and cherish children. It is not surprising then that chastity is not a praised virtue in the Andean system of values. On the contrary, it has been documented that during pre-colonial times, and when seeking a partner, men would value women who had previously conceived a child. The practice of bearing children before marriage currently persists in the Andean region of Argentina. As explained by a community member:

> *It is a widespread behaviour, one may say it is generalised, that in rural areas, women have their first child with one man and then get married to another one. It is rare the case of a man who is not raising another man's child. This is not taken as a negative element. The facts are not hidden. The child knows who his father is and so does the stepfather. Men assume this situation with responsibility, because another man is probably taking care of their child. There is reciprocity. But once a couple establishes a family, they respect each other, they are faithful. If they have ten children, they are of the same father, you can see they all look alike.*

Boman (1908) provides evidence of the historical continuity of cultural practices in the southern Andean region:

> *One may note in the (demographic) table a certain number of natural children... but the subjects in question do not have any shame in declaring that they have been born outside of marriage... I have also come to know that young women who have natural children are not reprimanded in any way. On the contrary, many women have had children by different men, before getting married... The natural children of a woman are ipso facto adopted by the man that she marries, and considered equal to the children of the legitimate union.*

Marital or partners relations in the Andes have particularities as well. *Servinakuy* is a tradition that persists in Quebrada and Puna. It translates as 'accommodation'. Man and woman come together in a 'trial union': 'They live together, have children and built their house...without letting themselves be impressed by laws, decrees or sermons', says Paleari (1992). The success of these unions he attributes to:

> *...a clear sentiment of equality between the parts, that results in an equitable distribution of obligations and rights; a physical and mental complementarity... If those conditions are met, the 'servinakuy' will be a success, if not, either the 'servinakuy' or the matrimony will fail.*

Also known as *tincunacuspa*, servinakuy is associated with the idea of becoming equal, an accommodation. The union of men and women represents the coming together of two opposite forces; an encounter that may be antagonistic and combative. However, in order to succeed, differences must be subdued and partners must become harmonically integrated.

The principle of complementarity of the genders guides child rearing practices as well. Boman (1908) observed that the 'paternal love and moreover maternal love seem to be very developed among the Indians, certainly more than among civilised people'. These observations have been confirmed by contemporary behavioural research. In fact, in a study of the impact of migration on parent-child interactions in Peru, rural fathers were found to provide more affection to their children than urban fathers (Bonnevaux 1981).

It is difficult to evaluate, based on data provided by the existent literature, or within the scope of the present study, the complexity of the private world of Andean couples. Nevertheless, the prevailing perception is that women in more traditional households maintain a greater degree of control, and have the capacity to negotiate in more equal terms with their male partners. They are also believed to possess physical strength and character that allows them to preclude verbal or physical aggressions.

Conflict, antagonism, and the overturning of social order

It is important to understand that the concept of harmony in the Andean world view, does not imply the existence of an idyllic universe free from antagonism. On the contrary, it is believed that the universal order and the generation and continuity of life is product of a constant struggle of opposite forces. Harmonising and antagonistic forces are at constant interplay within the universe and within its social reflections: the community, the household and the individual. *Jampi-laija* (good and evil) forces interact constantly (Kreimer 1990). In addition, traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution ensure the maintenance of societal cohesion, so the interaction between good and evil does not become chaotic.

Tinku is an example of one of these mechanisms. It is a periodical ritual combat that takes place between members of opposite halves of an *ayllu*. The struggle however, as in the case of the union of opposite genders (*tincunacuna*), seeks to accommodate and equalise the struggling forces. It does not seek the annihilation of one by the other. *Kuti* is another form of conflict resolution. It entails the constant alternation of opposing elements through a dynamic succession of social events (Kreimer 1990).

Western civilisation and the politics of the household

The distribution of labour and the social organisation of work are inseparable from household, community, and social relations (labour reciprocity, social networks of support, conjugal ties, and intergenerational and gender responsibilities of the domestic unit). Understanding the complex network of rights and obligations, the interrelations between household and community members, and the cultural representations that produce and reproduce these relations, is a critical starting point in developing an indigenous perspective on gender issues.

Traditional households maintain their own internal logic of social and economic relations, based on the more general framework of social functioning provided by the Andean belief system. In traditional Andean societies, crop and livestock production are shared activities, not segmented by gender; even though, particular tasks may be performed preferentially by women or by men. For example, when planting potatoes, men usually plough the earth as women and children plant the seeds. It is generally recognised that women who participate as equals in household productive schemes, are able to assert more leverage in determining the way in which the household is conducted. However, elements of an ancestral tradition, of matriarchal leadership, are also fundamental in conferring women a prominent role in the household decision making process.

The incorporation of indigenous people into global commodity and labour markets, initiates changes in the household productive schemes. These changes affect the benefits that men and women derive from productive activities. The erosion of household self-sufficiency results in an increased dependency on the acquisition of commodities, with fundamental consequences for the micro-politics of the household. Repercussions of this process affect the family unit as a whole. But women and children, in particular, are caught in between the gender based antagonistic forces. Andean women living in small towns or cities commonly have to work as maids. During their long hours of work children are often left alone, even very young children, who are cared by their siblings.

Working as a maid in a small town of the Quebrada where Westerners have built fancy vacation homes, Sisa, struggles to send her five children to school and, within her limited possibilities, help them with their homework. She cannot expect much support from her semi-estranged alcoholic husband who vents his anger with her and her children:

> *My husband is an alcoholic, we are separated so I and the children live in a different room of the tenant's house, but my husband pays the electric bill, so when he gets drunk he cuts off our electricity.*

In these circumstances, men and women cease to be equal partners of a common enterprise; that of creating and shaping new life, of nurturing the family and the children, the future of the community. Instead, antagonism ensues, thrusting the involved parties in self-defeating conflicts. Among Andean people, mothering and nurturing are also performed by brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, grandmas and grandpas, adopted aunts and uncles, in sum the household, and the extended family. Thus, mothers and children have access to a wealth of emotional and material support. The introduction of new forms of economic production collapses with the dominant representations of work, obligations, and social practices, that constitute custom and tradition. New forms of contestation ensue, the primary struggle being a contest over gender hegemony and the conjugal contract. As she pulled together her life experience in both rural and urban environments, Airampo, a Kolla woman and a community health promoter expressed:

> *In the communities the family unit is more preserved, here (the city) it is totally destroyed, it must be because of the environment in which we live. There is a remarkable family disintegration, and this situation happens over and over through generations. In the communities, mothers do not abandon their children even if they*

> *live with another man. The women that you see in the rural health clinic are all single mothers. It is very common to be a single mother, they live with their family, their family supports them.*

I interviewed Kausay, another Kolla woman, who worked as a maid in a small town in the Quebrada, had several children and had been abandoned by an abusive husband. I thought that she must have felt relieved when her alcoholic husband left her. As I mentioned this thought to her, to my surprise, she responded:

> *But it is very hard to be on your own. I was sick, I was in the hospital for a few days. I cannot work when I am sick, and who will take care of the children, who will earn money when I am sick?*

Women who live in urban environments and who have been cut off from their extended networks of support may face such strenuous circumstances that the preferences and trade-offs between support and abuse acquire surprising dimensions.

Women and men who work for wages, rely upon gender specific labour markets and working conditions. Different standards rule work performed by women and men. This situation contributes to the social marginality and subordination of women. 'Much is to be done in terms of women's rights and organising', explained Waylla, a Kolla community activist, as she planned a strategy for organising a meeting among women in the shanty town where she works as a teacher:

> *Here (in the city) women work washing clothes, sometimes they do not get a fair pay or they do not get paid at all, and they are afraid to say anything about it. They are more subdued. There are advertisements that request 'sleep-in maids without education', because the employers think that if women have not attended school, they cannot complain or stand up for their rights.*

Created expectations of males as wage earners result in the drive, among men, of expanding their personal power. However, among the lower strata of the capitalist society, male unemployment runs high. On the other hand, low paying jobs are more readily available for women. Thus, it is common for men to develop a sense of resentment and humiliation. When I asked Maraj, a health promoter, about the occupations of men in a precarious neighbourhood, she answered promptly and without hesitation:

> *Most of them are unemployed... Women are assuming all the responsibilities within the family. Men are simply not present or are irresponsible, most women work as maids and the husbands cannot find a job.*

Conclusion

The socio-historical background presented, provides evidence of the conflictive nature of the contact of indigenous peoples of the Andean region of the province of Jujuy, with the Spanish colonisers in an initial period, and further along, with the Argentine society. This contact did not only transform the material realm of life, but it also fuelled an ongoing confrontation of two largely opposite world views and values systems.

Individualism and the struggle over resources characterise the social relations within Western society. On the other hand, networks of social support are at the core of the social life of the Andean community. Cultural colonisation promotes the shattering of the life world of indigenous communities. Acculturative forces typified by the urban environment, act upon individuals who are thrust into a society where the economic sphere of life is highly pre-eminent. Breakdown of traditions and the unruliness and weakness of the normative order is what poor city dwellers encounter. In a world dominated by global markets and impersonal bureaucracies, frames of reference that rule social life become distant and blurred. Antisocial individual behaviours reflect the lack of guiding principles of collectively shared values and norms that govern the indigenous traditional community. Furthermore, racism and discrimination, economic inequalities, and the disarticulation of networks of social support are stressors that impact the individual. Despite scarcity of economic resources and a continuous drainage of human resources, the traditional Andean way of life provides a supportive, stable, and cohesive psychosocial environment for both women and men. Elements that prevail in traditional communities, such as maintenance of self-sufficiency, traditional social networks, and supportive family environments, together with non conflictive cultural identification and self-esteem are instrumental in developing successful models of urban adaptation.

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CHANGES IN WOMEN'S STATUS IN MICRONESIA:

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH

by Beatriz Moral

Chuuk is a beautiful group of islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. One of those places that make us think that paradise exists on earth. On the map, Chuuk is just a few small black points in the middle of the sea and a part of what is called ***Micronesia****.*

From 1992 to 1994 I lived in these beautiful islands to do fieldwork for my doctoral thesis in social anthropology. I tried to understand the islands' people, their culture and social organisation, and my aim was to understand how the Chuukese define womanhood, what it means to them to be a woman.

In this paper, I will treat only one of the aspects of this complex subject: the status of Chuukese women. The elements that are involved in it are numerous, varied and contradictory. We will find that traditional and modern elements are mixed up and the result of this mixture is, at the moment, very unstable.

Traditional society

A very important characteristic of Chuukese traditional society is that kinship is matrilineal. This means that a person belongs to her or his mother's family instead of her or his father's, as it occurs in patrilineal societies. We see that very often people mistake matrilineality for *matriarcality*, but they are totally different concepts. To have a matrilineal kinship does not mean that 'women have the power' (*matriarcality*). It only means that kinship is organised along female lines.

Chuukese traditional families are extended families, a person lives with her or his mother and father, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, grand-mothers and grand-fathers and cousins. These are very large families compared to the nuclear family (just parents and children).

The family represents the most important thing in life for Chuukese people. They cannot imagine somebody who does not have a family. They have a weak idea of individuality. In Chuuk, an individual can only be defined and identified by his or her belonging to a family, by the relationship of kinship that links her or him to a group. The individual is nobody outside the group.

This matri-group or family provides the basic needs that allow the survival of all its members, food, space and care. All activities are geared to strengthen and maintain the well being of the family, which represents the provider and protector of all its members. Outside the family, there is hunger, solitude and death. An individual, by him or herself, is a helpless being who doesn't have any tools to survive with and whose whole existence is menaced.

This traditional family is an organising system in which each member has her/his own place. The position of a person in the matri-group defines his or her function, rights, role, duties, hierarchy and tasks. The position of the matri-group in the community also affects the role of that person in it.

In Chuuk, the extended family includes people and land. People and land are a whole, to divide the land is equivalent to breaking up the family. This unity is not to be broken under any circumstances. The dead must be buried in the families' land in response to this necessity, because the unity goes beyond life and has to be maintained.

Giving or losing a piece of land is the same as losing one of the family group's members. Chuukese explain the loss of one or the other by the metaphor of a body that loses one of its parts. Losing one member or a piece of land threatens the survival and the well being of the family. Therefore, the keeping of this unity is absolutely fundamental.

Women are responsible for maintaining the unity between the land and the group, this is a key role. Women are responsible for making sure that the transfer of land inside the family won't be interrupted and that the unity won't be broken. Women guarantee the survival of the group by bringing in new members (giving birth to children) and preserving the peace and harmony in the family as well as with other groups.

The pillars of the Chuukese society are found in the basic triangle formed by women, land and family. Land and family constitute a vital, structural and functional unity, and women make it possible, protect it and maintain it.

Besides the importance of the symbolic value of the land, we also have to bear in mind its economic value, as well as its role in the distribution of political power. This link between women and land puts women in a position in which they can control one of the most important (and few) sources of wealth, power and prestige.

Fertility is another powerful link between women and land. The woman's fertility and the land's fertility are both sources of survival, continuity, wealth and power. It is the union of both fertilities that makes the family strong: women have children and the land provides food.

The incest taboo and rules of modesty

The drawback to the women's important role, is that they have to be silent. This silence is the result of a fundamental element of Chuukese culture: the incest taboo.

In Chuuk the incest taboo concerns the relationship between sister and brother, even if it also extends to other levels of kinship. The fundamental rule of this taboo is that the brother should ignore his sister's sexuality and anything to do with it. Therefore the sister has to erase any kind of sexual connotation from her behaviour and body in the presence of her brothers.

For reasons that we are not going to discuss here, woman is seen as a hyper-sexual being - her genitals are seen as the main symbol of sexuality (Gladwin & Sarason 1953:254; Moral 1997). Everything that comes from her has a sexual connotation, even just her presence, therefore rules of modesty are very strict. The ideal behaviour for a sister in front of her brother is to pretend that she is not there, she must try not to attract his attention, this is the only way for all sexual connotations to disappear. We have to take into account that, for a woman, all the male members of her clan of the same generation are considered as brothers, that is to say that there are always many brothers around, she has to be very careful not to break the rules imposed by the incest taboo.

As a consequence of the incest taboo it becomes impossible for a woman to take part in any public discussion because there will always be brothers in the audience. Women's interventions have to be done in silence if they are not to transgress the rules that the taboo imposes; that is why women have to take verbal strategies and lateral paths to take part in the decision-making processes. In Chuuk, as in the rest of the world, women use strategies to circumvent their exclusion from these processes. In Chuuk, women do that with great legitimacy because of the exceptional structural position they hold.

The sexual division of responsibilities and duties gives two parallel powers which have very few points of intersection. In this division of power men's responsibilities are always more prestigious. However, there is a superior instance: the unity of the family. Women have to deal with any threat made to this unity, a responsibility which is above any male title and prestige. It gives women the last word, **but** it has to be performed in silence.

In the old days, the simple presence of a woman in a battlefield was enough for the conflict to end, without a single word said. Her drastic decisions would have been communicated by a spokesman. This responsibility is exclusively limited to such occasions when the unity and harmony of the family is threatened and never outside these limits. This role as guardians of the unity is still performed (even though it has lost a lot of its former strength), as was shown during the temperance movement in 1976 (Marshall & Marshall 1990).

Chuukese society today

The foreign influences in Chuuk have been numerous: Spanish, German, Japanese and North American. Let's also add Christianity. The strongest influences have been the Japanese, the North American and the Christian. Here, we will only consider the last two, not only because they are the most recent but also because they are the ones which have brought most changes.

The presence in the Chuuk lagoon of the first Protestant missionaries (North American Puritans) goes back to 1879 (Hezel 1972). They were the first foreigners who established permanent residence in Chuuk. The Catholic missionaries (German Capuchins) appeared in the lagoon in 1912 (Hezel 1987).

Chuuk has been under the United States' political and economical control since World War II, although they had stakes in the area before that time. From World War II until 1989, Chuuk was a Trust Territory of the United Nations under the United States' supervision. In 1989 the Federated States of Micronesia were established (of which Chuuk is one of the four states) under a democratic system and a constitution taken from the North American one. Today, the link with the United States is still in force because of a huge economic dependence and because of the Compact of Free Association.

There is a common point between the Christian and the North American influences: both of them share a strong patriarchal ideology. The consequences of this bias for Chuukese women's status have been fatal. Let us first see the effect of Christianity.

The role of Christianity

As we have seen before, the rules for modesty derived from the incest taboo are so severe that they could almost be compared to the most strict Christian morality. Therefore, to assume the Christian morality rules was not difficult for Chuukese women. The form was the same but the contents were different: they kept the highly integrated modesty rules but they substituted to the incest taboo the Christian idea of sex as a sinful activity and the woman as an object of temptation. This last idea was not unknown in Chuuk: women are always held responsible in the case of incest, being hyper-sexual they provoke men, who (Chuukese say) don't know how to control their sexual impulses and can't resist women's charms (Moral 1997). In Chuukese traditional culture, women would be the temptation of incest, in Christian morality temptation to sin. The traditional contents were not removed: nowadays both - incest taboo and sin - are combined, this enhances the pressure and the control through their sexuality on women.

Another consequence of foreign influences and changes in Chuukese society is a tendency towards a nuclearization of the family, therefore giving up the traditionally extended one. Many factors create this situation, for example a more or less recently introduced money economy, wages, in which the traditional family economy of solidarity and survival has no place. This new economy is based more on the idea of the individual who earns his or her own money than with the work she or he performs (Hezel 1987).

Christianity's role in the process of nuclearisation of the family has been very important. The influence of its messages, its idea of good and right is very strong. Christianity offers a model of family that is based on parents and children (the nuclear family) and that gives a very preeminent place to the father. This injunction is not necessarily explicit (even though it may be so), it is just implicit. The image of God as a father has been a determinant element and a strong image that points to the father as the figure of authority. The role of the father was secondary in traditional families, the brothers had the authority over the sisters' children.

Given the importance of the extended family, this nuclearisation implies a series of changes. This results in the weakness of the traditional family as the organising principle in people's lives and the weakness of the links between its members. Its traditional role is belittled: it lacks relevancy to the new nuclear reality of the families. All the roles are redefined and in this transformation women lose the power that their role in the responsibility of the survival and harmony of the matri-group used to give them. Their role as guardian loses all its meaning; they lose the control over the land and they also lose the capacity to participate in the decision-making processes, because the decisions now taken concern other and new values in which women have no say. In this redefinition of roles, men become the head of the family unit, thus, male power is legitimised and strengthened.

The disintegration of the extended family as the basic structural unit implies the disintegration of the Chuukese traditional society as such, the dissolution of female power and competence, and the legitimisation of male power.

Another effect of the disintegration of the extended family is the disappearance of the protection given to women by their families in case of abusive husbands. Traditionally, families were obliged to give protection to all its members, therefore women were protected. Nowadays, this kind of intervention would be taken as an encroachment on the husband's authority. He has gained much power over his wife, as much as her family has lost. This has led to 'domestic violence' being considered inherent to marriage.

The North American influence

The United States has introduced many changes in Chuuk and I believe that most of them have left evident consequences. Here we will just talk about the ones I consider most important. Even if TV only arrived in Weno (the capital of Chuuk) in 1993, the videotapes were already common in this island, as they are in the other islands where TV has not arrived yet. The most viewed movies are the typical 'sex and violence' North American films in which women always play a role full of sexual connotations. In a society where female behaviour must be absolutely free of sexual undertones, the impact of the images of women shown in movies is important. The media have reinforced the idea of women as hyper-sexual beings, and therefore, they have also reinforced the traditional way of thinking about women. All the traditionally taken measures to make sure women would not provoke incest have been, therefore, enhanced. This does not help improve women's status.

Nowadays very little is left of the traditional governing structures, where women used to have ways of participating, their own domains of action and the respect which went with it. Since 1989, democracy has been established in the Federated States of Micronesia. Democracy was the condition the United Stated had demanded of the Micronesians so as to give them their independence. Chuukese have understood that the democratic system (or any modern government) takes place in the public domain, and is in relation with men and honorary titles. As we said before, women don't have the right to be in the public arena: it is the men's place. In this new system, women have lost the traditional ways and accesses to power as well as the consideration linked to it. By the establishment of a democratic system, the United States has closed most of the ways women had of participating in the decision-making processes.

The two main consequences of this new government introduced by the United States are: 1) the legitimisation of male power, in considering men the only possible interlocutors because they had the most visible power (which does not mean that it is the most effective); and 2) they pushed feminine power aside not acknowledging it, given its traditional state of silence - which doesn't mean that it wasn't efficient. Christianity, for its part, has also collaborated to reinforce this idea through the introduction of relevant male characters - like the priest or the minister, not to mention God and Jesus Christ - and through their attitude of neglecting the value of the female role.

The introduction of primary and superior education has been a serious blow to traditional knowledge, especially because it has been understood as the only access to the new political and economic power. The new educational system (added to the disintegration of the traditional forms of government and of the traditional family) has come with the almost total disintegration of the mechanisms of transmission of traditional knowledge, which has degraded women's situation. Since the traditional role of women as guardians was practised in and from silence, the respect they enjoyed did not come from their public participation, but from the fact that this role was a 'loud secret' which was transmitted in the intimacy of the family. It was something known by everyone, not because of its public and evident character but because its importance and function were transmitted from generation to generation. As a result of the breakdown of this chain, the female's basic role as guardian of the unity of the traditional family has almost been forgotten, and, if it has not been forgotten, it does not have the importance it once had.

Conclusions

We can find three basic elements that have contributed to the weakening of women's power.

First, the **nuclearisation of the family** has implied the weakness of the traditional family as the basic social unit, and therefore the role of women has lost its relevance.

Secondly, the **breakdown of the mechanisms of transmission of traditional knowledge** has provoked a gap in the knowledge of women and has lessened the recognition, prestige and respect their roles traditionally used to hold.

And thirdly, the **introduction of modern or democratic government** has blocked any possibility for women to take part in the decision-making processes, since the political arena is understood as a public domain, a place of prestige and titles and is exclusively masculine.

We can also see that **the control of women's sexuality has been increased**, as well as of their behaviour and movements in general. The introduction of the idea of sin in the realm of sexuality, using the modesty rules that concur with Christian morality in their configuration, has increased and refined the control over female sexuality. At the same time the idea of woman as a hyper-sexual being has been reinforced by Christianity and North-American media, which strengthens the necessity of control over female sexuality and female behaviour in general.

Finally, we also find a **decrease of the protection of women** because of family nuclearisation. This nuclearisation weakens the bonds within the extended family, and the protection the group provides for women; the nuclearisation increases the husband's authority, against which women have neither weapons nor protection.

The traditional elements have not totally disappeared, and they still carry weight. Women's role as guardians of the transcendental unity of the traditional family still remains in its original form, as well as in other expressions. But it is now adapted to the new circumstances, such as in women's associations which are the current guardians of the well being and harmony of the communities.

Women's associations are numerous and very active. Most of them are religious associations and they perform many tasks for the well being of the community - which could be considered, from a Christian perspective, as 'charity' tasks - like the cleaning of the hospital, the construction of a meeting house for the families of the people who die in the hospital (far from their home islands), the distribution of clothes and food for old and poor people, and other tasks of this kind.Their most important intervention in the life of the community has been during the temperance movement (Marshall & Marshall 1990). Women associations forced the government to approve a dry law (which has not been very effective). In this movement, women represented the guardians of the harmony of the community and they felt and applied the right of intervention in extreme cases. We have to say that alcoholism is one of the most serious problems in Chuuk which threatens the well being of the family and causes a lot of disruptions in the community. At that time, the women thought that the problem was extremely serious and exceptionally they came into the public and male arena to show their disappointment and to require from the authorities a solution to the problem.

This role of women associations is the new expression of the traditional role of women. They still feel the necessity of accomplishing their role as guardians but they do it from new structures. The relevance of this role is clearly expressed in the weight and force that these associations have today in the community.

The present situation of Chuukese women's status is like a hybrid born from past and present. The new influences have introduced some changes, but these are sometimes just the reactivation of some of the traditional elements, like the male authority, which has been reactivated by the reinforcement of the power of the public domain, or female modesty rules by the introduction of the idea of sin. At other times traditional elements have been neglected and left latent, such as women's traditional power (silent but efficient). But they are rediscovered when necessary.

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FINDING THE BALANCE - BETWEEN ETHNICITY AND GENDER AMONG INUIT IN ARTIC CANADA

by Helle Høgh

Inuit in the eastern part of Arctic Canada have succeeded in gaining the right of self-determination and self-government in Nunavut. As part of this process the legal system has to be revised so that local people to a considerable extent will be able to resolve their own conflicts without the interference of the Canadian judiciary. In the organisation of the new judicial system Canadian Inuit women fear that their individual rights as women will be neglected. They are caught between their ethnic and gender identity.[1]

The flying court

The community is buzzing with activity. The flying court of Canada has arrived for its semi-annual visit to handle the offenses that have piled up since the last time. For a few days the community hall will be transformed into a court of law. The tables are arranged in a horseshoe with the prosecutor and the counsel for the defence on each side and the judge in the middle. The flag is solemnly unfurled over the edge of the stage and forms the background scenery. The legal retinue are transported from the airport on the back of a pickup truck and drive through the community as though they were on parade. Men and women in correct business suits emerge from huge parkas and thermo-boots. As the files, records, stenography machines and interpreters are getting organised the room slowly fills up with local people. Most of those present have been charged and nervously await their turn before the judge. General confusion prevails. The defence counsel tries to find the proper connection between people and cases. A storage room is transformed into a conference room in which the accused have a few minutes to greet their lawyers and interpreters before the court is in session. The first case, which is four months old, is a case of spousal assault committed by a 21 year old man. The husband had made some home brew and invited his friends to a party. The wife didn't want to be part of the party and attempted to leave which the husband prevented by beating her and threatening her life. He pleads innocent. An elderly Inuit woman, invited by the judge, is permitted to address the offender before the passing of the sentence. She tells the young man that it is wrong to beat his wife. She then addresses the battered wives and advises them to listen more to their husbands. Women who listen to their husbands do not suffer assault and battery, is her message. The judge puts the man on a probation order. A total of 30 cases are heard in the community over two days. The large majority are cases of spousal assault. Only a few of the battered wives appear in the court room while the court decides the destiny of their husbands. The legal retinue leave the community by plane as abruptly as they came. The tables are pushed aside and later in the evening there's a disco in the community hall. Life in the community goes back to normal.

Criticism of the court

For a long time there has been considerable criticism of the fact that the Canadian courts and legal system disregard Inuit culture. Courts and prisons are very foreign to the way Inuit solve conflicts. Time and again language barriers, lack of contact with lawyers and ignorance of local conditions have been pointed out as problems. Since the court only meets once every six months the cases have become insignificant and the sentences seem meaningless such a long time after the event. Sentences passed on cases that are no longer relevant are often the cause of new domestic disputes. There are no refuges for battered women in the communities so the women have nowhere to go in the period between reporting the case and the sentence. Many women therefore do not report assault. Things are changing, however, for approx. 20,000 Inuit living in Nunavut, 'our land'.

On April 1, 1999 the Nunavut agreement on Inuit self-government will become effective. Nunavut is now in the Northwest Territories

In the summer most families leave their communities in order to live on the land. Photo: Helle Høgh

but will become a completely new, geographical and administrative territory consisting of a fifth of the total area of Canada. The agreement was signed in 1993 and since that time preparations for the implementation of self-government in 1999 have been going on.

More than 25 years of negotiations between Inuit politicians and the Canadian state have given Inuit the collective right to organise their society in accordance with their particular culture, traditions and ethnicity. One of the revised areas is the legal system. It will be based on Inuit's own way of solving conflicts.

New legal structure

A decentral legal system is on the way in Nunavut where local community justice committees will handle the conflicts arising in small local communities. The idea is that local people will handle local problems themselves. Some typical examples are theft, sale and abuse of intoxicants, wife beating, and sexual assault on women and children. Murder cases and other serious crimes are excepted. They will continue to be handled by the Canadian Supreme Court.

Members of the community justice committees must always arrive at a consensus on the solution of a conflict. The central element in conflict solving is that the criminal must be brought to accept and take responsibility for his act. This occurs in a 'healing process'. The healing process takes place in personal counselling with community elders and at meetings in which community elders, members of the justice committee, the criminal and his family, the victim and the victim's family and possibly the priest or a social worker discuss the conflict and try to solve it. The decision is not based on punishment but on healing the 'social scars' the criminal act causes in the community. The elders are in charge of personal counselling because they are the repository of traditional knowledge and can share this knowledge with the younger generation.

In several locations in Nunavut, community justice committees have been experimentally established to work on conflict solving based on this holistic understanding of the law. In one fairly large community the community justice committee handled a case involving a youngish rapist. It was decided that he should be sent away to live with a hunting family who were also to serve as his counsellors. As penance for his criminal act the young man was to work as a hunter for a year, giving a portion of his take to the victim's family. The solution not only gave economic compensation to the victim's family but also gave the young man responsibilities and experience with the harsh realities of living on the land.

This form of conflict solving appeals to many people in Nunavut because it makes it possible to incorporate Inuit's own norms and values as opposed to the Canadian legal system which might have given the young rapist a prison sentence. Nevertheless introducing decentral conflict solving is not without its problems.

Rights of Inuit women endangered

Pauktuutit, the Canadian Inuit women's organisation, has pointed out several problems in connection with the establishment of community justice committees. The organisation fears that the justice committees cannot guarantee the legal security and protection of vulnerable groups such as women and children.

The main point of the criticism is that women's affairs, primarily wife battery and sexual assault, will not be taken sufficiently seriously by the community justice committees because of the internal power structure in the communities. Family membership is incredibly important to Inuit and in a large majority of communities there are power struggles between various family groups. Close family ties can easily put members of the justice committees, typically middle aged men, in a difficult position, torn between family loyalty and resolution of the conflict at hand.

The idea of using local elders as counsellors in the communities is also problematic in Pauktuutit's opinion (Pauktuutit 1993). The organisation points out that views vary as to what constitutes assault on women and that older Inuit may tolerate greater levels of violence than young Inuit women of today will accept. The elderly woman in the court room is an example of this difference. Her advice to battered wives was that they should listen more to their husbands. The young women did not comment on the older woman's statements because you don't contradict an elder. But they said later that the older woman's advice was of no use to them. It was old fashioned and out of step with contemporary life in which alcohol and other intoxicants are often the cause of assaults on women. 'What does she know about our problems?' was the young women's comment.

The elders, who grew up in the nomadic hunting and gathering way of life, can have difficulty understanding the problems young people experience in their every day lives and how they try to tackle them. Older women and men were often brought together in arranged marriages in which the couple had to learn to live together. The younger generation of Inuit is born and bred in a modern social structure with a permanent residence in the communities and an every day life characterised by being tired of school, unemployment and boredom. Young women choose their partners themselves and can also choose for themselves whether they will leave him some day. Their individual rights as citizens allow them the opportunity of having money and housing placed at their disposal by the Canadian state.

If community justice committees are to have a positive effect in the communities it must be recognised that there are different versions and interpretations of Inuit culture and rights today. The challenge will be finding the balance. How can the collective, group rights of self-government and cultural development co-exist with individual rights for women?

Between ethnicity and gender

Inuit women in Nunavut are in a dilemma. On one hand, as part of a group, they have won the collective right of self-government. Collective rights enable Inuit to pay particular attention to cultural considerations based on tradition when modelling their government. On the other hand these very rights can also be instrumental in limiting Inuit women's individual rights as women and Canadian citizens with the right to personal freedom, security and equality before the law without discrimination. Even though Inuit have got self-government, Nunavut nevertheless remains part of the Canadian state and under the constitution.

Pauktuutit fears that the individual rights of women may be headed for rough times in Nunavut since women are poorly represented in the political and decision making organs on the local level. It is therefore highly unlikely that young women will be called on to participate in the justice committees. The lack of equal opportunity will not promote the security and rights of women in the coming self-government.

Nevertheless, because of currently unfavourable conditions, Pauktuutit is not unfavourably disposed towards the establishment of community justice committees as an alternative to the existing legal system. By being made responsible for their own problems Inuit will in many ways be better off than under the present Canadian judicial system. It is necessary to keep an eye on the situation to prevent local usage from discriminating against women and excluding them from participation at all levels in the community. Several Inuit politicians are aware of women's lack of participation in political life. They have tried to promote their status and rights as a parameter in the organisation of self-government.

Self-Government and gender equality

In 1994 prominent Inuit politicians launched a concrete, political attempt to improve conditions for women and their right to participate in decision making in the new self-government. The plan was that the coming Nunavut legislature, as the first in the world, should consist of equal numbers of women and men. In other words it was an attempt to implement a political quota system based on sex. The idea was that at elections there should be two ballot sheets - one for male and one for female candidates. The men and women with the most votes would become members of the legislature. This is a comparatively simple model of government based on political consensus instead of party politics.

The proposal for gender equality was set forth in hope of re-establishing Inuit 'traditional equality and respect between man and woman', as it was put, in a modern form of government. They presented the nomadic life style Inuit had traditionally led. The men hunted and got food for the family while the women took care of the children and worked up the men's take. Each domain was considered equally important because there was a mutual interdependence between the men's and women's areas of work - a balance which was disturbed by the colonisation and modernisation of the Canadian state.

The gender equality proposal was brought to a referendum on May 26, 1997 at which 57.4 per cent voted against and 42.6 per cent voted for a quota based on gender. The most widespread argument against the proposal was that it would undermine the principles of democracy if a person were elected on the basis of gender and not because of personal and political competence. Those who supported the proposal did so because they felt that women were poorly represented in politics. In addition the idea that Inuit would be the first in the world to carry into effect a government based on gender parity was quite appealing. It would give Inuit a good image internationally.

Politicians tried to find a balance between Inuit women's ethnic and gender identity by considering the modern form of gender equality as a traditional cultural element among Inuit. But their arguments did not evoke a real response in the local population. This may be connected with the processes of change taking place in Nunavut.

Politics, gender and culture

For Inuit the process of going from *demanding* rights to *achieving* rights has changed the political climate and their self image.

Starting in the early 1970s the political arena in the Arctic was characterized by rights negotiations with the Canadian state and the international community. When presenting their demands for rights Inuit had to argue for their particular culture and ethnicity. They presented themselves as a homogenous group sharing the same understanding of what it means to be Inuit and sharing the traditions their identity is based on. A small, well-educated elite was responsible for the definition of Inuit group identity in the process of political negotiation. But the elite's cultural and ethnic definition of Inuit is not necessarily the most representative of the local communities' culture and self-image. This becomes clear when demands for rights are achieved. Achieving the right of self-government changes the situation and shifts the focus from external confrontation between Inuit and the Canadian state to the internal organisation of self-government in Nunavut among Inuit themselves. In this situation new problem areas arise in which ethnic group identity is no longer the central issue. The proposal of gender equality is an example of this process in which culture, identity and rights are up for debate. The politicians' evocation of Inuit cultural traditions of equality between men and women did not evoke a response in the local population in a modern, political context.

Attention will be focused on individuality, differences, and the existing, internal power structure among Inuit in Nunavut. How should rights be administered and self-government organised? Whose interests should be considered and who should receive special consideration? In this context the question of gender becomes central in the political discussion for collective and individual rights because women are caught between their ethnic and gender identities.

Note

[1] This article was first published in *Jordens Folk*, No.4, December 1997, Copenhagen.

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CHAPTER 3

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE STRUGGLE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 5 of the Beijing Declaration

> *We, the women of the original peoples of the world have struggled actively to defend our rights to self-determination and to our territories which have been invaded and colonised by powerful nations and interests. We have been and are continuing to suffer from multiple oppression; as indigenous peoples, as citizens of colonised and neo-colonial countries, as women, and as members of the poorer classes of society.*

THE CHAMORU AND GUAM

by Ulla Hasager

Chamoru[1] are the indigenous people of Guam and the other islands in the Marianas. Of Guam's population of approximately 150,000 in 1995, the Chamoru comprised 47 per cent. There were 25 per cent Filipinos and 10 per cent Caucasians (not including the US military). The rest were Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, *Korean and other nationalities. Overwhelming immigration from Asia of foreign labour is hastily changing this picture.*

Guam has been under colonial rule since the 1600s. Hundred years ago, in 1898, Spain 'ceded' all 'Crown' lands in Guam to the United States in the Treaty of Paris. Up to 1950 and except for 31 months of Japanese rule during the Second World War, Guam was administrated by the US Navy and used as a coaling station.

Today Guam is a Territory of the United States under the Department of Interior. The leader of one of the groups of the indigenous rights movement in Guam, Angel Santos, is now a senator in the Guam Senate and is running for governor this year. The government of Guam has been pushing for Commonwealth status with the United States for almost ten years. The United States Congress has been moving very slowly on the matter and in the meantime, the Chamoru have begun looking into a range of possible forms for self-determination.

Even though land is the basis of Chamoru culture, the Chamoru own less than one-third of the island. Vast areas have been taken by the US, mostly for military purposes. December 10, 1998, marks hundred years of US colonial rule for the Chamoru, who today are fighting, not only for their lands, but also for their existence as people.

Note

[1] Chamoru is a new orthography for Chamorro, and is widely used by members of Nasion Chamoru (Chamoru Nation). There is, however, a big controversy on Guam among Chamoru linguists, politicians and educators on the spelling..

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INSIDE OUT

by C.T. Perez

Thirty years ago, I sat as a young girl in the back seat of my mother's car. With my face pressed to the window, I squinted and focused my gaze on the car that sped along with us on a parallel road. We were separated only by a seemingly endless fence, which I could blur to nothing if I held my eyelids just so.

Across the fence lay another world. It was another world on the same land. A world we called N.A.S.. Naval Air Station was one of several US military force bases on Guam.

I was never able to follow the fence to see what it encompassed, but I learned quickly the lingo and feeling of exclusion it created. We needed an I.D., a military identification card, to go 'inside'. They didn't need anything to come 'outside'.

'Inside' lay spectacular cliffline views and expansive, well-manicured fields. 'Outside', so I was repeatedly told, held nothing more than a distasteful quagmire of pothole-ridden, mudlined roadways, indecipherable landmarks, nameless streets run rampant with wild dogs and other remnants of what some would describe as an uncivilized world.

I knew that we were 'outside' the luxuries of what was contained 'inside' the fence. I had visions of the houses I could never see 'outside'. Theirs was an orderly world of tidy streets, neatly kept lawns, showcasing houses straight out of the home section of a Sears catalogue. We lived 'outside', in a rented Quonset hut, marked by an inclined gravel roadway and a proliferation of *tåke biha*[1].

'Inside', I had heard, kids were paid to do household chores that we did as a matter of course. I used to want what they had, or what I thought they had. I mimicked their style of dress and remember wanting a pair of faded blue jeans more than anything. I was ecstatic when, after my relentless nagging, my mom agreed that I could buy one pair of jeans. Her only prerequisite was that they were bought on sale at Town House - the Old Town House[2].

I learned quickly that my success in life would be measured by how well I could emulate 'inside' attributes and suppress 'outside' characteristics.

The acquisition of the jeans was soon followed by the purchase of a jacket that would have kept me warm in the tundra, but should have been illegal in this tropical climate. These things could only be followed by my new-found desire for a Brady-inspired[3] family room, separate laundry room and dining room. It was a tall order for my single-parent mom to fill with our typhoon-proof, compact, yet functional, Kaiser[4] home and a teacher's modest salary.

I'm sad to say that my mother died long before I learned to value my life 'outside'. I grew to my adult years accumulating the material wealth I associated with being from the 'inside'. I've long since surpassed the Sears catalogue ideal with a blend of *Architectural Digest*[5] and *This Old House*[6]. A house, a *condo*[7] and some acquired land later, I've had my fill of trying to mirror the 'inside'. I have everything they had and more; and still I find myself on the 'outside'.

Now three decades later, I pass the same stretch of road. The fence still stands, although they say the base is phased out and the land has been returned. I manipulate my gaze to send that fence into oblivion once more, but when my eyes tire, the fence still stands.

When I first heard N.A.S. would be closed, I dreamt of how the fence would come down. I thought we could make a day of it. We would assign sections of the fence to different families to take down, accompanied by roadside barbecues and a freedom parade. Then I remembered the fuel line. Upon realizing that the fence was still needed to protect the pipeline, I altered my vision.

On the day of the closure we should have a million and one Guam flags tied to the fence. That would be a sight to behold. There was an idea - or even a kite flying picnic on that huge field by the main entrance, or a caravan of cars through the grounds.

Then we heard. They weren't giving the land back.

The gates would still be maintained, softened only by a color changing of guards. As time passed, they put even more fences on their side. These fences marked where they had dirtied our lands in perpetuity. They'll give the land back, they say, after sufficient time passes to prove we are competent caretakers of the land.

Where the fence once made me feel wanting for the treasures I thought it contained, it now makes me feel anger for the stolen treasures it retains. I flash back on the man who scaled that fence in protest of the land being taken. He was apprehended and shackled by the military police. While others criticized his actions, I could only see him as brave. Restrained as he was by human force and metal handcuffs, he was free. He had freed himself in that moment from the mental bondage of our colonial existence. In retaliation, he spit on his captor.

At first I shuddered in disgust. 'What low had this cultural hero sunken to' I thought. After much reflexion, my judgement changed. He showed bravery. What else could he do? What makes us believe spitting is so disgusting anyway?

Now, the landscape is changing. Whether you call it Tuyan or Tiyan[8], N.A.S. is gone forever. As formerly military homes are remade into GovGuam[9] offices; as the struggle continues between local government and private landowners; as the land tries to purge itself of negligent dumping; as motorists try to reclaim passage; as confusion reigns, the landscape is changing.

I've kept the blue jeans, worn in a style and meaning all my own. I've long since discarded the jacket, having found no ornamental or functional use for it. I've given up trying to turn myself 'inside' out. Now, 30 years later, I can stand on either side of the fence. There is no 'outside'. There is no 'inside'. There is only what I allow to persist. The land is one. Today, the air smells sweeter and the sun shines brighter. The landscape is changing.

Notes

[1] Medicinal plant

[2] 'Town House' is one of Guam's oldest department stores. There are actually three 'Town Houses', three buildings of the same store. There is a 'New Town House', an 'Old Town House', and the 'Old, Old Town House'.

[3] Brady refers to the television family of the 'The Brady Bunch'. They represented the ideal mainstream American families of the Seventies.

[4] Name of first major subdivision housing development on Guam.

[5] High-gloss magazine featuring fine homes.

[6] Public Broadcasting television program on renovation of fine homes.

[7] Short for condominium.

[8] In the renaming of N.A.S., traditional place names were suggested. These were the two names used.

[9] Government of Guam. Territorial Government.

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THIEVES

A poem by Anne Perez Hattori

Thieves, they called us[1].
Religious converts, they made us.
Said we were sinful,
naked, savage, and primitive

Exterminated, they called us.
Half-castes, they branded us.
Said we were impure,
racially - culturally - spiritually

Infantile, they called us.
Wards of the state, they made us.
Said we were immature,
UNeducated, UNdeveloped, UNcivilised

Now they tell us
we are simply, sadly, contemptibly

OVER-developed
OVER-modernized
OVER-theologized
OVER-Americanized.

UNDER-Chamoricized

Note

[1] The title refers to the name given by Ferdinand Magellan in 1521 to the Chamorro Islands: 'Islas de los Ladrones' - Islands of the Thieves.

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THE BATWA WOMEN OF RWANDA

Batwa[1] of Rwanda are recognised as being one of the 'pygmy' peoples of Central Africa. However, most of them were long ago forced off their lands and abandoned life in the forests that were once their home. Their current status is that of a minority both numerically and politically, with a long history of discrimination and marginalisation.

In 1958 the Batwa were assumed to make up one per cent of Rwanda's population. It is believed that up to 30 per cent of the Rwandese Twa population died or were killed between October 1993 and June 1995 during the genocidal conflict, and today, they are probably no more than 0.2 or 0.4 per cent of Rwanda's population or approximately some 11,000 people (Lewis and Knight 1995).

CONFRONTING DISCRIMINATION

by Claudine Mukamakombe, Clotilde Musabeyezu, Pulchérie Umubyeyi and Elyvanie Kamondo

The life of the indigenous people of Rwanda has always been difficult and miserable. Always at the margin of society, they have never participated in the life of the country, whether at the social, economic, political or intellectual level. The policies of yesterday and today have never wanted to face their problems.

Indigenous women have not been spared this calamity, and this explains the underdevelopment that characterises them, a problem that unfortunately will not be solved tomorrow or even in the near future.

Economic and social discrimination

Economically, the Batwa women live miserably as they have no means to solve their own problems. The majority have no land to cultivate, and the very few who do face difficulties buying seeds or even simple agricultural instruments like hoes. For those who do practise some form of agriculture, the lack of cattle and hence manure means that their outcome is meagre.

Finding work to do for the other population groups is not a solution as they are depreciated, underpaid or do not even receive a salary.

Most therefore survive by making their traditional pottery, but they have to confront an increasing competition from the more durable metal or plastic products now available.

Often badly dressed and dirty due to lack of money to buy essentials like soap, clothes, pomade, etc., Batwa women find themselves the laughing stock of everybody and left aside by their sisters from the other social groups of the Rwandese society. In some parts of the country, they are not even allowed to share the same drink or a meal from the same plate as the other women. Therefore, they are fearful of mixing with other people unless it is to beg for food or clothes.

They often live on their own and in small groups, and many of them have no place to live in or live in makeshift huts or shelters. This also explains why they are often completely isolated and even rejected by the other populations groups in Rwanda. This further contributes to making them backward and marginalised.

Maternal and infant mortality

Maternal and infant mortality are on the increase because the Batwa women do not dare to go and claim the care and the vaccines they need during their pregnancy and after the birth of their children. When the women present themselves at the hospitals they are the laughing stock of the medical personnel. In the case of diseases, they do not have the money to pay for medicine.

Another reason for infant mortality is that they give birth under poor conditions, in unhealthy places. As they do not receive the necessary support and care, they do not know how to feed their children correctly. They in turn develop kwashiorkor and many die at a young age.

Because of the bloody events which have saddened this country, many women have found themselves as widows with a great number of orphans for whom they are responsible. Taking care of these children is becoming more and more difficult because you cannot raise a child without food, clothes or even a shelter. It is easy to imagine the future of these poor children; it will of course be one of mendacity or delinquency.

Many women are illiterate. Because of their marginalisation, they cannot easily be integrated into the other groups of the Rwandese society, which also explains the limited number of children that attend school.

Confronting their problems

What also contributes to the Batwa women's miserable situation is that they have no one to help them. Batwa women are not represented politically in the country. There are no Batwa women ministers, no members of parliament, no mayors, no directors, and there is therefore no one to whom the women can address or explain their problems.

They are never invited to participate in meetings, conferences or other events together with the women from the other classes of the Rwandese society, and they cannot be members of the associations of these women.

In order to improve their situation, the indigenous women try to confront these problems. The women attend meetings organised at the village level by the authorities, where they can get useful information, and despite the discrimination described earlier, an increasing number do nevertheless approach the health care posts when they need pre-natal health care or advice on infant nutrition.

To overcome illiteracy, indigenous women are also making an effort to send their children to school. But the problem of school fees, expenditures for school materials and school uniforms is not easily solved and therefore many drop out of school before even having learned to read and write. The young Batwa boys, however, get more opportunities to study than the girls who must help their mothers with making pottery which they learn to do at a young age; or with looking after their younger siblings while their mother works; or with cooking while their mother is making pottery.

A Mutwa potter. Photo: APB, Kigali, Rwanda

Batwa women have also tried to establish co-operative groups in order to organise themselves better, to share ideas, to learn to read and write, and to get more productive skills like dressmaking, embroidery, knitting and other handicrafts. They get some support from those Batwa women who have had some education, but it is difficult as they are scattered all over the country and cannot visit everyone of the groups due to the lack of money and means of transport.

The need for support

The indigenous Twa women are going through a very unhappy situation. They need guidance and help to be integrated into the other groups of Rwandese society. And they need support to overcome the difficulties they meet.

This support could, for example, be the creation of associations to group them, where they could be reached in order to facilitate contact with other women. It could also be securing some representation at the national level, for example in the ministries. Other areas could be the creation of jobs in rural areas, reduction of school fees for orphans and widowed mothers or other incentives to pursue an education, provision of convenient shelters and basic things like household equipment, food and clothing, school material for their children, cattle, agricultural implements and seeds, etc. Support could also be aimed at developing and modernising the women's pottery production through the introduction of improved stoves and other forms of appropriate and sustainable technology and by training them in modern pottery skills. It could also be by inviting them to educational meetings with women from other population groups.

Once the goal of being integrated in the other social groups of the Rwandese population has been attained, the Batwa woman will no longer be the laughing stock of others, and she will no longer have any problems in the society.

Note

[1] Batwa is the plural form, the singular form being Mutwa. The stem 'twa' is often used in their place.

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__Pulchérie Umubyeyi__ and __Elyvanie Kamondo__ are affiliated the APB (Association pour la Promotion Batwa) which was created in 1991 as the first autonomous 'Pygmy' association in Africa. Elyvanie is the president of APB-Femmes, the APB women's group.
__Claudine Mukamakombe__ and __Clotilde Musabeyezu__ work within ADBR (Association pour le Développement Global des Batwa du Rwanda), founded in 1994. Clotilde is the representative of the women of ADBR. Pulchérie and Claudine are also both on the steering committee of CAURWA (Communautés des Autochtones Rwandais) as representatives from their respective associations. CAURWA is an umbrella association of Twa organisations that unifies and co-ordinates their activities.

PAKEHA LAND LEGISLATION IN AOTEAROA: THE CONTINUOUS RESISTANCE BY MAORI WOMEN

by Moana Sinclair

The denigration of Maori women and their original status in our ancestral lands as leaders is a product of colonialism carried out by white male patriarchy. Colonisation has meant that Maori women and the people as a whole, like many indigenous peoples of the world, have been severely damaged to the point of near destruction.

The status of Maori women before the arrival of the white man

Apart from a few contemporary accounts, history regarding Maori women has mainly been written by Pakeha[1] men and often proved to give a totally wrong picture of Maori women. Lynda Tuhiwai Smith (1933:33ff) states:

> *Fundamental to Maori women's struggle to analyse the present has been the need to reconstruct the past conditions of Maori women. Those who first wrote about Maori society at the time of early contact between Maori and European were not Maori, neither were they female. Consequently, Maori women were either ignored or portrayed as wanton, amoral and undisciplined creatures. Maori society was portrayed as a hierarchy based on gender, and by being left out of the accounts, Maori women were portrayed as being excluded from participation in decision-making and determining tribal policy.*

Traditionally, both Maori women and Maori men could become *Kaumatua* (respected elders). As leaders of the *whanau* (extended family) *hapu* (sub-tribe) and *iwi* (tribe) they made decisions concerning the working of family land, the control and use of family property, and the rearing and education of children (Firth 1959:114). The hapu was the autonomous political landholding group led by its own *rangatira* (chief) descended from the ancestor after whom the hapu was named. The iwi was the largest kinship group, this group was made up of all the hapu, and large iwi had *ariki* (paramount chiefs or high priests). Today, for example amongst some iwi, that role can be carried out by a woman. Te Atairangikaahu, a woman from the Tainui iwi, is the figure head and leader amongst the Tainui people and in the central North Island area, Tumu Te HeuHeu, a man from Tuwharetoa iwi is the paramount chief (Ranginui 1996:76 ff). Although it should be noted that Te Atairangikaahu is the descendant of a Western model, a monarchy which Maori created in the 1850s in order to stop the taking of Maori land by settler speculators and colonial governments.

Legendary females and women of rank

Our legends are full of powerful female figures who showed strength and leadership. *Atua* (gods) male and female are the precursors of human interaction. For example, Hineahuone, a woman, was the first human created according to Maori legend. She 'brought the power of growth and creativity' (Submission by Maori woman quoted in Royal Commission Policy 1988). Others were Murirangawhenua (the ancient goddess whose *Kawae* or jaw became the sacred fish hook that fished up Te Ika A Maui, the North Island); Mahuika (the goddess who held the knowledge and powers of fire); and Rona (the bewitching moon who held the ebb and flow of the sea tides in her grasp). All are formidable *Wahine Atua* (goddesses) who together with their male counterparts, are the land, the environment, give strength and wisdom and serve as role models for Maori people as a whole.

Parallel and co-ordinate roles were played by both high born men and women. Maori women had *mana* (control) over land as land passed to women as part of the bilateral descent practised within Maori society. And there is clear evidence that certain Maori women of rank exercised power in the same way that Maori men of rank did, as historian Angela Ballara (1993) points out:

> *It was a time-honoured chiefly prerogative, exercised by both men and women of high rank, to make choices of marriage alliances, permanent or temporary, for their daughters.*

Pre-contact events which recognised high priests who were women chiefs are reflected still in the contact period where women such as Tamairangi of Ngati Ira and Ngati Kuia as well as many others

> *...personified mana over land and people in their communities and descent groups. They were 'wahine rangatira' (women of chiefly rank and power), some were ariki, the apex or contemporary focus of several senior lines of descent, in which resided spiritual forces of awesome potential. These women took part in debates, made decisions binding for all their people, male and female, possessed 'mana' and were 'tapu'* (Ballara op.cit.).

Evidence of this is well documented for an east coast tribe named Ngati Porou. In his thesis (1951), Apirana Mahuika, a contemporary leader of Ngati Porou, clearly documents that most of the main *Wharehui* (Meeting Houses) are called after prestigious women in Ngati Poro *whakapapa* (genealogy) and senior genealogy lines come down from women. He states that the Pakeha concept of primogeniture which applied only to males in English society was not what was practised in Ngati Porou. Instead, bilateral descent to male and female was and still is practised.

This function of male and female chieftainship was undermined by protestant religious sects which missionised New Zealand. Their practise of male ritual dominance eroded the male-female complementarity (Salmond 1991:354). All Maori women were to be subjected to the domestication and chattelisation Pakeha women suffered.

Maori world view

It is necessary to understand the relationship and the philosophy of the Maori world view in order to understand what has been lost to not only Maori women but Maoridom as a whole.

The relationship of the Maori with her/his land sets the foundation of Maori society. It is a reciprocal and familial relationship. To the

Maori the land is a *tupuna* (an ancestor), and therefore the Maori and the land are one and the same family. *Papatuanuku* (Mother Earth) is to be sustained in a way which would allow her ecosystems to regenerate and continually exist in order to sustain her children. She has an inherent life of her own which must be respected and cared for.

Maori land tenure is a holistic one in that the link to the land is both physical, spiritual and genealogical. The Maori have a relationship with the land which is intimate and emotional. Women are in the image of Papatuanuku. The Maori relationship to their land is completely different to that of the Western view but common to other indigenous peoples throughout the world.

The spiritual relationship governs everything physical. *Io Matua Kore*, the 'Parentless One', is the starting point. A direction was given by the Parentless One and *Te Po Kore Kore Te Po Tango Tango, Te Po Uri Uri Te Po Roa* (i.e. the gradations of darkness which preceded the coming into the world of light) was to cease and the physical world take shape. *Ranginui* (Sky Father) and Papatuanuku then emerged from their timeless embrace, between them lay their many children, supernatural beings which personify the sea and the moon and the many elements. *Tane Mahuta*, one of the sons, asserts himself and severs the ancient parents, thus releasing his siblings into the world of light. Tane Mahuta creates the first woman *Hineahuone* (female formed from the earth), and together they procreate. Here begins humankind.

> *The Maori of old accepted the responsibilities of his supernatural ancestry that made him guardian priest of the deities that controlled the relationships among the human, animal, vegetable, insect, reptile, fish, bird, mineral and spirit worlds. It was because of these ancestral and spiritual relationships that the Maori fished, hunted and cultivated only to the degree necessary to secure his/her wellbeing. It was inconceivable for her/him to develop senseless spoliation of the environment to the degree required by the so-called civilised world* (Sinclair 1987).

Land was a tribe's physical, intellectual, economic and spiritual wellbeing. The practice of burying the *whenua* (afterbirth) of a baby back into a specific piece of *whenua* (land) is an example of how Maori are forever linked back to Papatuanuku (Mother Earth). This prac-

A Wharehui (meeting house) on the east coast of North Island.
Photo: Lesley Holst

tice also served to legitimate that child's *turangawaewae* (standing place) within his/her tribe.

Maori land tenure

On arrival the coloniser found that every mountain, lake, river and piece of land had been named by the Maori. The tribal boundaries were defined and operated according to their own tribal *kawa* (law) with major decisions being made by men and women of rank for the iwi or hapu. Certain groups were granted usuary rights by elders and chiefs as the need arose. Some areas were not occupied physically by Maori but the usuary rights of the land and its resources were agreed by neighbouring tribes, breaches of this brought conflict. Maori land tenure took into account five main categories.

Take Tupuna or Ancestral Right to Land was gained by inheritance through either parent, the mother or the father. One of the first missionaries stated that 'the territorial possessions of the natives are hereditary, descending from the father and mother to the eldest son or daughter' (Kendall, quoted in Koopman-Boyden 1984).

Another writer stated 'that in some tribes male children inherited their father's land, and girls their mother's' (Shortland 1851). Anthropologist Anne Salmond (1991) writes that 'there are many sources... which assert that women kept their land rights even after an exogamous marriage...' and that in regard to Maori women and their mana over land '...evidence indicates that women often inherited land and resource rights, and that on occasion they were principal landowners and the ancestral source of claims to land'.

This is significantly different to the position of Pakeha women in regard to land ownership. Pakeha women were not considered legal persons and therefore could not hold title to land:

> *At the time of European settlement (from 1814 onwards) European gender relations were controlled by an ideology of male dominance far more severe than the agnatic biasses that existed in Maori reckoning of descent group status. European women were legal minors who came under the guardianship of men, and they had no independent rights to control property or to formal participation in political decision making* (Salmond op.cit.).

Whenua Kite Hou/Whenua Taunaha or Newly Discovered Land was another category. It was a woman who discovered and named Aotearoa, later named New Zealand by settlers. When Kupe came to Aotearoa it was his wife Aparangi, who said '*He ao, he ao, he ao tea roa*' (It is a cloud, a cloud, a long white cloud). Prepared spiritually, physically and intellectually the Maori were guided to their destined land. Having such an intimate knowledge and spiritual connection with their environment, the sea, the bird patterns, clouds and fish habits, the journey here was no mistake. *Moana Nui A Kiwa* (the Pacific Ocean) was well-known territory to the Maori. The sight of certain cloud formations told Aparangi there was land below the long white cloud (Lewis 1978).

Discovery of land was marked by the placing of *pou rahui* (post or boulder), then a symbolic tree or rock was named and the relevant *karakia* (prayer) was recited over the area in order to protect the claim of discovery. This practice is a physical and spiritual bind. Thereafter, it would be named and the surrounding landmarks would also be named with ancient names from Hawaiki[2]. If evidence was required to substantiate a claim, the recitation of certain landmarks and their names would have to be given orally. This knowledge was extremely important because it safeguarded any descendant's claim to a particular land and it was handed down to the appropriate people within the tribe. This knowledge was held by *tohunga* (experts) both men and women.

Ahi Kaa Roa - literally those who stayed on the land kept the home fires burning - was a third category. To prove continuous occupation of the successive generations, the ancestral flame was to be alight at all costs against all comers. The longer the land remained in the undisturbed possession of the claimant, the stronger the claim was. This could be evidenced by cultivation of *maara* (vegetable gardens), the use and age of *urupaa* (burial grounds) or adduced evidence of hunting and fishing grounds. Absence from tribal land for up to three generations would be viewed as *ahi mataotao* (fires gone cold) and claim to that land could be lost. Anne Salmond (1991) notes that:

> *The land rights might revert to the wife's people if she died without issue,if a marriage broke up or if descendants did not occupy the land, and indeed the practice may have varied regionally and in different circumstances.*

Tuku Whenua or Gifting of Land referred to land passed bilaterally from the mother's people and father's people. The practice of *Ohaki* was a deathbed deposition of land. It was made by a person nearing death and fair allocation was awarded in order to prevent war amongst the sons and daughters. Often some sons would leave and make claim to land held by their mothers.

Whenua Raupatu or Confiscated Land was the fifth category and referred to land acquired and lost by conquest. Land claimed by conquest alone was not sound, only active occupation secured land under this head. Adventuring conquerors who did not wish to occupy took only nominal possessions.

The treaty of Waitangi (1840) and the imposition of English common law

The signing of the Treaty of Waitangi by Captain William Hobson and some 46 chiefs (and later a total of 500 chiefs) on 6 February, 1840, imported a new constitutional basis to Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The questionable claim of sovereignty by the coloniser via the signing of the treaty involved Maori women. Thirteen Maori women have been identified as having signed the treaty on behalf of themselves or their iwi, and there may be more yet to be identified. Historian Claudia Orange (1987:90) talks of the Crown agents allowing certain Maori women to sign. One can only postulate as to why Pakeha men 'allowed' them to do that. In most tribes there were identified chiefly women. One of them, Hineipaketia, was the 'person of highest rank' in her district. She was called 'the queen', and

> *Her lines of descent ... made her senior to her husband Puhara, and to her cousin Te Hapuku, both of whom were regarded as two of the five highest ranking chiefs of central Hawke's Bay* (Ballara op.cit.).

The imposition of the Pakeha/English common law entered Aotearoa via the Treaty of Waitangi. Huge flaws and constitutional untidiness surround the Treaty of Waitangi. To this day its legality is challenged by Maori.

Article one of the Treaty (English version) states that the Maori ceded sovereignty over Aotearoa to the Queen of England. The Maori version states clearly that governance of the fast growing settler population alone was agreed upon. Under the same article pre-emption solely to the Crown was claimed for any land that was sold by Maori. In 1846, under the Native Land Purchase Ordinance, it was declared an offence for anyone but the Crown to buy any Maori land.

Initially, when the Maori were in the majority the laws made by the colonisers recognised Maori customary tenure in that Maori had a right to 'enjoyment' of their lands. However, this was to change swiftly. In 1852, to ensure that Maori had no representation or voice in their land affairs, the Constitution Act denied the Maori a vote in the 'democratic' process of electing representation. A property criteria which recognised only individual land title excluded most Maori from participation in the formulation of laws that would affect the two people.

Soon after, the legal machinery was put to work in order to extinguish Maori title by converting customary title to European title by direct purchase by Crown negotiation. This conversion of title meant that any individual Maori could sell land to the Crown. This 'divide and rule' tactic usurped the voice of the collective tribe thereby making it easier to target individual Maori to sell land.

Growing Maori opposition to the European's presence and his laws was evident by the 1850s. It came in the form of the King movement, the focus being to retain the land. This immediately caused a clash with the settler demands and the government purchasing policy. Eventually, martial law was declared to discipline the 'rebels'. The 1860 land wars were inevitable.

The colonisers' 1863 Rebellion Act was passed during the land wars. It ensured the confiscation of 3 million acres from the Maori - this was to punish the 'troublemakers'. The Native Lands Act 1865 established the Native Land Court which was to assimilate all Maori land holdings and convert them to English common law title under the Torrens system. This included the ascertainment and definition of rights. A certificate of title was issued and this brought into play the government's 'Ten Ownership rule', i.e. ten Maori names were to be put on the title thereby dispossessing all other Maori who had traditional rights in the land, many of whom were women (Ballara op.cit.), and the erosion of the concept of collective title began.

Kotahitanga (The Maori Parliament) and Action taken by Maori women

The 1852 New Zealand Constitution Act provided parliamentary franchise to Pakeha males who had individualised title to land. This totally excluded Maori women and tribally held landowners. Fifteen years later the 1867 Maori Representation Act provided for four Maori seats for Maori males only.

Prominent Maori took action. They established their own Maori parliament, Kotahitanga. Maori leaders from all parts of the North Island, united to present grievances to the Pakeha government and to protect Maori rights under the Treaty. The Maori Parliament established tribal boundaries which provided electoral districts. A lower house had 96 elected members and the upper house had fifty members. By 1895 there were 35,000 persons associated with the

Kotahitanga movement. One of their main objectives was to halt sales of their land.

Specific Pakeha land legislation progressively undermined Maori women as landowners. The Native Land Act 1873, clause 86 stated that husbands should be party to all deeds which the law required to be acknowledged before Commissioners. In 1876 Reverend Samuel Williams wrote to Chief Land Purchase Commissioner, Sir Donald McLean complaining that the successive Native Land Acts threatened great injustice to Maori women.

> *We all of us know that according to Native usage and custom a Native woman can deal with her land without reference to her husband and Native women who have their lands brought under these acts have in very many instances dealt with them without their husbands signing the deed they not considering that their husbands had any voice in the matter and the husbands considering that they had no right to interfere.... These married women are now being told that according to English law they cannot deal with their own lands without their husbands being parties to the deed. In regard moreover to past transactions vigorous efforts are now being made by certain individuals to induce them to repudiate contracts which they have entered into in that way and to makefresh arrangements with other persons...* (Williams 1876).

Like most colonising strategies with stealing indigenous peoples' lands it was three pronged in that religion, the gun and foreign laws were used. Reverend Samuel Williams played a dual role, that of a Reverend, shepherding and advising his new Maori flock in their land transactions with the new settlers and colonial governments and that also of land speculator. In 1870 he was implicated in the scandal of the 20,000 acre Heretaunga Block in which he received a tidy package. His concern for Maori women stated above to Donald McLean is misleading in terms of his own motives but very telling of a system which had as its sole objective to bring Maori land under an individualistic, patriarchal regime.

In the same year any Maori women who married according to Maori customs were then made subject to 'the law of New Zealand, as nearly as it could be reconciled with Native custom'. This was in regard to how they would leave their property. Pakeha male lawmakers ignored the fact that Native custom allowed Maori women to deal with their property as sanctioned by the iwi.

This was how Pakeha land legislation stood when in 1893 at Te Waipatu, Hawke's Bay, Meri Te Tain Mangakahia stood up in the Lower House. Prompted by the Kotahitanga Parliament's proposal to government to bring all remaining Maori land under the control of the Kotahitanga Parliament, she wanted to ensure that Maori women would have a say about how they themselves would deal with their own lands, should that proposal be accepted. She asked for Maori women to have the right to be included among the electors of the members of the Maori parliament, and furthermore to be eligible to stand as candidates in the Kotahitanga Parliament (Coney 1993:284ff). She argued that:

> *1. There are many women in New Zealand whose husbands have died and who own land under grant or "papatupu" (ancestral) land.*
> *2. There are many women in New Zealand whose parents have died and who have no brothers, and who own grants or papatupu land.*
> *3. There are many intelligent women in New Zealand who marry men who do not know how to run their land.*
> *4. There are many women whose parents have grown old, and who are intelligent women with grants and "papatupu" land of their own.*
> *5. There are many male chiefs in this island who have appealed to the Queen over the problems affecting them, and we have never received any advantage from their appeals. For this reason I ask this House that women members be appointed* (McRae 1993).

Her plea was finally granted by the Maori Parliament in 1897. What effect these Maori women would have had we will never know, as the Kotahitanga Parliament was never recognised by the newcomers' law.

Political role of newspapers owned and run by Maori women

Meri Te Tai Mangakahia's motion was a catalyst for the establishment of Nga Komiti Wahine (tribally based Maori Women's Committees).

The work of these Komiti's was reported in newspapers owned and run by Maori women such as *Aotearoa* (1861-1862), *Huia Tangata*

Kotahi (1893-1894), *Korimako Hou*(1889-1890), etc., and especially *Te Puke Ki Hikurangi* (1897-1913) owned and run by Niniwa I Te Rangi. Widespread intellectual discussion and debate on political issues amongst Maori women was communicated through these newspapers (Ballara op.cit.).

A generation younger than Meri Te Tai Mangakahia, and founder member of Komiti Wahine o Heretaunga (Women's Committee) Akenehi Tomoana had initially suggested in 1893 that women who voted or stood as members in the Kotahitanga Parliament should have a lower status than the men. But by 1895 she had changed her mind and stridently spoke out believing that the actions of men had achieved little and it was time women took over. Thus she declared at a meeting that the Native Land Court be abolished, and that there was to be a cessation of leasing, selling, surveying and mortgaging of Maori land.

This caught the attention of the Pakeha press. The caption of a patronising cartoon of the New Zealand Graphic read:

> *'New Woman' refusing to sell more Maori land. The Minister of Lands asks: "But my good woman, if we don't buy your husband's lands how will you live?" 'The New Woman' replies: "That's our affair"'* (Coney 1993:285).

The cartoon shows a bare breasted warrior type Maori woman fending off a barman-dressed Minister of Lands and a drunken Maori husband sitting on the floor holding a bottle of rum. The cartoon is set in the 'Bar of Native Land Court'.

Speaking at the meeting also, Pukepuke Tangiora, a woman of high rank from a *hapu* of Ngati Kahungunu 'chastised the men for having failed to protect Maori land, provoking a rejoinder from Hapuku that "the men had done the best they could" '(Coney *ibid.*).

In support of Akenehi Tomoana's declaration, newspaper owner Niniwa I Te Rangi in 1898 gave evidence to the Native Land Court, in support of tribal committees being given the authority to investigate all matters affecting Maori land. She spoke on behalf of 37,000 other members of the Kotahitanga Movement (Unity Movement).

In the 1890s the Kotahitanga Parliament attempted to introduce a Maori Rights Bill into Parliament in 1894. The bill sought Maori control over their own lands, fisheries, oyster beds, shellfish beds, tidal estuaries and other Maori food resources. When the Bill was tabled Pakeha members walked out of the House and in 1896 Parliament rejected the Bill (Walker 1990).

Contemporary resistance by Maori women

The Komiti Wahine which was born out of Meri Te Tai Mangakahia's stand in the Kotahitanga Parliament continued to function all over the country until the Second World War.

Princess Te Puea Herangi of Tainui (the female ancestor of the present Maori queen Te Atainrangikaahu from the Tainui tribe) in the 1930s and 1940s with the assistance of Apirana Ngata from Ngati Porou established land development schemes and 'worked to re-establish the Waikato people economically and culturally' (Rei 1993, Coney 1993). She also opposed the Pakeha government's recruitment of Maori men to go to the Second World War, stating that it was not a Maori war but a Pakeha war.

During the 1930s depression, Maori women united with Pakeha women organisations in their common concern for the health and welfare of the people. World Wars I and II took their toll on Maoridom and further weakened the *whanau* (family), the hapu and the iwi. The capitalist world accelerated and the individualised title- holders in rural areas gained finance to improve their, now gained, freehold and leasehold titles, making it impossible for many Maori to pay for improvements as required under the lease. Many Maori were forced to find work in the cities. Demographers called it a 'rural to urban drift', but for a lot of our people it was relocation into ghetto like city flats or state housing reservations in order to find work. The Maori who managed to stay on their *papatupu* (ancestral lands) struggled to pay imposed rate bills and were in constant conflict with local councils.

Maori women saw a need to cater to the urbanised Maori who were not welcome in the predominantly Pakeha cities. The Maori Women's Welfare League was formed in 1951. The emerging Black consciousness in the United States with the Black civil rights movement had gained momentum by the 1960s. It created a resurgence of Black pride throughout the world and urban Maori could easily relate to the issues of racism and oppression. They drew strength from people like Malcolm X and Reverend Martin Luther King. Long and loud protests for the return of Maori land were heard throughout the country by Maori and supportive non-Maori, rural and urban.

During the 1970s and 1980s Maori women played a key role in arranging and leading several protest actions against the government's land and natural resource policy. In the last two years a government proposal to settle all Maori land claims by the year 2000 with a fiscal cap of one billion NZ dollars has been unanimously rejected by Maoridom throughout the country. However, the government has paid out $170 million to the Tainui tribe as well as handed back a few fragments of land and is now using this as a benchmark for other Maori land claims. There are over 600 Maori land or resource claims before the Waitangi Tribunal that was set up in 1975, but only three 'settlements' have been carried out. Ostensibly the Waitangi Tribunal was set up to quell Maori anger and protest activity over the injustices.

The struggle continues.

Feminism and Mana Wahine[3]

Maori philosophy cannot allow a separating out from the whole, our men and children are a part of this whole. If we are to survive the damage of colonisation and neo-colonisation we need healthy and progressive Maori men. Unlike Western feminist thinking we cannot afford to separate from Maori men. However, we cannot suffocate under the manifestations of their damaged mindsets either.

Feminist theories of the West rose out of a European male dominance of European women that could only perceive women and children as property or chattels. This is not our history. Maori society recognised *Wahine Rangatira* (Maori women chiefs), *Tohunga* (experts, wise women) and *Ariki* (high priests or paramount chiefs) who made binding decisions for her people. For these women their powers were equal to that of the male chiefs. This chieftainship role was not based on accumulation of property and therefore status. Maori tribal leadership was not by virtue of genealogy alone. A leader would need to earn respect and loyalty by the demonstration of leadership, this meant a demonstration of sound knowledge and good judgement for the betterment of the people.

The challenge by Cathy Dewes of the Te Arawa Trust Board[4] when nominated by her people to be a member is an example which demonstrates not just her challenge to protocol but an attempt to regain a traditional way of operating with both male and female contribution. Cathy works to reclaim the process of decision-making for women not just in the village setting but also in today's boardrooms, to shape policy that will impact on family and tribe, to have a say about the control and management of resources for the tribe.

As Reverend Eru Potaka Dewes rightly points out:

> *The issue highlights the struggle of Maori women for their Mana.... It seems clear to me that some iwi will empower Pakeha males and quite possibly Pakeha females by granting them speaking rights before their own Maori women* (New Zealand Herald, August 1994).

Cathy's challenge is a form of resistance in order to regain some control over Maoridom's destiny. We, like our native Hawaiian sisters

> *...want to achieve a collective self-determination. That is to say, we want to achieve sovereignty through and with our own people, not separated from them as individuals or as splintered groups. Such individualism and separation promise only more confusion and more alienation, the very maladies which so afflict industrial peoples* (Trask 1993).

Conclusion

In the process of colonisation Maori males entered the imported English power structure where they immediately became subordinate. An individual rather than collective property rights criteria for males only, disenfranchised most Maori. The English practice of primogeniture ignored the fact that Maori practised bilateral descent where certain Maori women not only had *mana* over huge tracts of lands but were chiefs amongst their people. The aftermath of the land wars provoked by the imposed colonial government saw Maori resistance put down and the eventuation of land confiscations from 'rebel' Maori who tried to protect their lands. This led to the establishment of the native land court in 1865; this court ensured that the process of extinguishing native title (i.e. collective title) and the establishment of individual title was carried out. Excluded from the political system and the formulation of laws or policy Maori attempted to create their own parliament, a movement which saw many Maori women such as Meri Te Tai Mangakahia speak not just for women but for the rights of Maori as a whole. Arguments were based on the rights of Maori under the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. A treaty that promised full and exclusive possession by Maori of their forests, fisheries and all *taonga* (treasured things) unless they of their own free will agreed to sell. The Crown ensured that they alone would have pre-emptive rights to purchase Maori land.

European introduced diseases and two European world wars, which insisted on the conscription of Maori males, further weakened Maoridom. A few educated Maori male leaders brought about a cultural revival but challenge to the Pakeha power structure was limited. Very few Maori women were tertiary educated at this time because of the education policies which worked only to assimilate and domesticate Maori girls and boys. Bank criteria which only loaned on individually owned land titles and not collectively owned Maori land created obstacles for Maori who wanted to further develop their land and escalated the rural to urban drift of Maori families where many went to find work in factories, construction sites, road works, log mills or freezing works. Maori women found themselves below even the Pakeha females. Removal from the land by war, land confiscations or urbanisation has meant more land loss and a people in crisis in need of nourishment of our values and philosophy.

Leadership amongst Maori has been usurped and attempts by Maori to reassert leadership is abysmal and apes the white male power structure. Maori men have been emasculated in Pakeha society. Loss of dignity and increased frustration has led to domestic violence and abuse in many Maori homes.

In pre-European times Maori women were leaders and owners of land, they had much influence over land matters and tribal politics, they were chiefs and high priests equal to men, unlike European society. Today, against the odds, certain Maori women have emerged educated and articulate in both Maori and non-Maori worlds. Some of our mothers, grandmothers and aunts are in many cases the repositories of Maori knowledge, they teach the language and the traditional chants and songs. Still, Maori women continue to be marginalised and not just by white patriarchy. Maori women must now deal with being marginalised and denied by our own men who have adopted white patriarchal ways, who have forgotten the *mana* (prestige and strength) of their mothers.

Individual Maori women are therefore challenging the Maori males who adopt white male power structures like Trust Boards - a structure which largely does not work for Maori people as a whole and continues to deny the voice of Maori women. The task confronting Maori men like Reverend Eru Potaka-Dewes is to take up the challenge of re-educating Maori men as to what is our way and what is the colonisers' divisive way.

We cannot go forward without our men and our children; we are a collective people linked to the land. We must liberate ourselves from the coloniser, together. This means much healing and an abandoning of colonised mindsets by both men and women, now.

Our society may not have been perfect, but it was ours and far superior to the male patriarchy of Europe.

Notes

[1] Pakeha means white and is the name given to Europeans

[2] Hawaiki is a spiritual place where Maori believe they originate from. Many names in the Pacific show a genealogy between Pacific islanders and the Maori.

[3] Women of status, but Mana Wahine also encapsulates ideas of women strength, power, influence, beauty, all these things as having derived from our female ancestors and female goddesses.

[4] A statutory body which now administers the affairs of tribal groups and allows only males as members and denies the speaking rights for women.

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WOMEN ASK FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE ON BOUGAINVILLE

by Daphne Zale

Since 1989 the people of Bougainville have been forced to take up arms against the Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) to fight for their social, economic, cultural and political rights but also to promote their right to self-determination, as is enshrined in the United Nations Charter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Geographically, Bougainville is the most northern and the biggest of all the islands of the Solomon Island Archipelago. It is nearly 1,000 km from PNG's capital Port Moresby, 500 km from PNG's nearest town of Rabaul, but only 8 km across the border to the Solomons and about 400 km from Solomon Island's capital of Honiara[1].

Background to the crisis

As has been established recently by pre-historians and archaeologists, the islands of Buka, Bougainville, Shortlands, Santa Isabel and Nggela were joined together some 28,000 to 30,000 years ago, and were only separated by a small narrow strait from Guadalcanal.

Cultural and ethnic ties between the Solomons and Bougainville have existed since time immemorial. This is still the case today where in fact some of our tribes even own land on either side of the imaginary border between Bougainville and the Solomons because of their ethnic ties. Our songs and dances are similar, so are our artifacts and our traditional customs.

Beside ethnic, traditional and cultural ties Bougainvilleans and Solomon Islanders have also strengthened these ties through marriages. I am a case in point where although we come from Buka Island my husband is a part Solomon Islander.

Bougainville was separated from our Solomon brothers and sisters in 1898, in a 'Colonial Real Estate Deal' between Germany and Great Britain, that did not even seek the views of our leaders and people. Our people argue today as they have always argued in the past that they never freely gave or surrendered their sovereignty away to anyone including the Germans, the British, Australia and now to Papua New Guinea.

This is the very basis for which our people continue to legitimately argue against being a part of Papua New Guinea, in this current conflict and war between the PNG State and the People of Bougainville.

This separation finally led to the entrapment within Papua New Guinea State, when the Australian Territory of Papua New Guinea attained its independence in 1975; despite the fact that we, Bougainvilleans, demanded that a referendum be held on the island to decide our own political future.

When this was refused, our people declared their own Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Papua New Guinea and Australia on September 1st 1975 to assert this right. This was sixteen days before Papua New Guinea itself became an independent state from the Australian Colonial Government on September 16, 1975. This right continues to be denied to our people today.

The mining issue

One of the many reasons why we were denied our right to self-determination in 1975 was the fact that the only resource generator that Papua New Guinea had available at that time was the Panguna copper mine on Bougainville, which was established by the Colonial Government of Australia in 1968, through its mining company CRA, Conzinc Rio Tinto of Australia.

The then Australian Colonial Government knew this because as it was preparing Papua New Guinea for its independence, (because of the pressure from the United Nations), it was clear that Papua New Guinea did not yet possess a viable economy to support an independent country.

The Bougainville Copper Mine is owned 53 per cent by CRA, 20 per cent by the Government of Papua New Guinea and the rest by private shareholders in PNG and Australia. From this equation not even one single equity share was given to the people of Bougainville, let alone the landowners whose land was taken off them to dig the copper, gold and silver from. What also followed afterwards was huge environmental destruction to our environment, flora and fauna.

Since 1975 the economy of Bougainville because of its copper, gold and silver has been bank rolling PNG's independence with only a trickle of financial budgetary allocations going back to Bougainville every year. This has been worth billions of dollars to Papua New Guinea and Australia.

The Island has been responsible for 43 per cent of PNG's foreign earnings, 17 per cent towards its internal revenue and budget for the last 20 years, until PNG had its own mines to produce gold, copper and oil. The big THANK YOU that we are now getting from Papua New Guinea is a terrible war on our hands, and it is the women, children and civilians who are the worst victims of this war.

The disenchantment of Bougainvilleans because of this great economic, social and political injustice finally led to the people rising up and asserting their rights. This eventually led to the people forcibly closing the CRA mine on Bougainville in 1989.

They are now known as the only indigenous people in the world to have closed a mine owned by the biggest mining giant in the world CRA/RTZ. And they are very happy to keep it that way forever.

Women and war

I was amongst the more than 3000 women that met to address women's issues and agenda, during the United Nations World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995.

As a part of the women's delegation from the Pacific region I also represented our women on Bougainville, especially those from behind the blockaded region. They were and are still subjected to all manner of hardships, pain and sufferings in the war currently conducted between the Papua New Guinea armed forces and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) on Bougainville.

Although we women came from different parts of the world, with different backgrounds, the problems that women faced in times of war or under repressive regimes were the same for all of us, not excluding our women of Bougainville.

Violence against women, the effects of war on women, the atrocities and crimes against women during wartime were and are common problems faced by women all over the world in one form or another.

Women are raped and killed during the time of conflict and war. Rape is very often deliberately used as a 'weapon of war' not only for self gratification by an invading army, but also to demoralise the opponent. Our women have experienced or have been subjected to all of these kinds of treatment since the war on Bougainville started in 1989.

Such treatment to women humiliates and denigrates us and the effects reach through to our men and our communities. In all our societies it is the women that maintain our communities, are the custodians of our land and by attacking them the opponent aims to destroy the very roots of our communities.

I am encouraged to know that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights during its 52nd Session in April 1995, Geneva, adopted a resolution to give further protection and promote the dignity and human rights of women and girls. The UN Commission on Human Rights emphasised that discrimination on the basis of sex is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The UN was most concerned for women who were specially vulnerable to violence, women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, refugees, migrants, women living in remote or rural areas, women in detention and women in situations of armed conflict. The UN called for governments and other institutions to enact legislation to better protect the rights of women and girls, and to punish perpetrators through both criminal and civil measures.

It is against this backdrop that we, the women of Bougainville, are fighting and calling for an end to this seemingly unending war. And to also call for all parties either participating, or aiding and abetting this war to stop it, as we women have suffered so much; subjected to rape, violence and even death from the hands of all those involved in this war and war atrocities.

You may now ask: Have the women and young girls on Bougainville been subjected to rape, violations and mistreatment? The answer is 'yes' with hundreds of cases committed by ALL parties under arms, since this war started eight years ago. I have emphasised ALL parties including the Papua New Guinea Security Forces, pro-PNG Resistance fighters and some members of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA).

Life behind the blockade

Women and children who have chosen not to go down to the 'care centres' - the PNG-controlled camps - have to hide from the PNG military, otherwise they would be rounded up and forced to go at gun-point on foot or by road in trucks.

A lot of women choose not to go down because they have heard from people that escaped that they are not free to come and go. They have to work at set times in gardens and carrying water and washing in rivers is only under guard of PNG Defence Forces. Food shortages in these 'care centres' have also been acute at the best of times.

In the BIG (Bougainville Interim Government) and BRA controlled areas we have gardens and the people have built for themselves temporary houses. We call them 'camps' as they are not on our own land, or on our true village sites. Our people travel between camps and are free to go anywhere, as they do not get pushed around as in PNG 'care centres', or detention centres as we really know them.

Our families in the bush choose to stay with the BRA because they don't want to give their land and freedom away and believe that the BRA are fighting for their rights. They are not prisoners of the BRA. They are free people and are free to move from camp to camp to visit their families; or set off like myself to seek medical treatment from relatives in the Solomons. We do not have 'check points' behind the blockade like our relatives in 'care centres' have to face.

The BRA risk their lives all the time in bringing the sick and injured people across the blockade for medical attention. They do this without any pay or favours. We report properly to the Solomon Islands Immigration Authorities and to the Red Cross camps.

Not all men are BRA. Men can choose to go out fighting or choose to be civilians. Some civilian men and women are given responsibilities in the bush camps in leadership and in carrying out administrative work such as law and order work in the villages. Others help plan small training programmes.

Others are teachers, medical officers, nursing aids, agricultural officers, men and women who have had training and work amongst our camps without any pay. Thus we have continued with full life community service - our reward being a happy community despite the lack of material possessions and any wage system.

When we talk about independence, we are self-reliant and are already practising it in the bush.

Behind the blockade there is a lack of medicine to treat illnesses, lack of immunisation for children and babies which could be a potential problem - especially when the chemicals sprayed from helicopters over the jungle affect the children. Worst of all, symptoms of bad coughs, severe headaches, and swollen glands like mumps were experienced. Children have died. Chickens, flying foxes and birds fell out of trees and died.

Because the people have to live in the high mountains to escape the shooting on the lower plains and the coast, the people do suffer from the cold temperatures and clothing is in very short supply. In some areas it is very critical.

There are some villagers that are naked and are ashamed to come out to meet the rest of the people. The young and the elderly are the ones that feel it most.

People returning to Bougainville try to take extra supplies with them, but are limited because of small canoes and can only take what they can carry when walking up the jungle paths and tracks.

The people have learned to survive on bush vegetables and fruits and local game such as wild pigs, etc. In some areas the people are planting rice closer to their camps as well as sweet potato and taro. People exchange clothes for chickens, ducks, pigs - so a barter system has replaced the markets.

There is virtually no hard currency since the banks closed on Bougainville in 1990.

Refugees

There are about four to five hundred obvious refugees but the total number spread with relatives across the Solomons could be even two thousand refugees from Bougainville. Many of us went into the Solomon Islands as patients, others for personal basic needs, but decided to stay on because of the continuous fighting on the island. We are glad that the Solomon Islands Government has allowed us under the Refugee Convention to live in the Solomon Islands as refugees. We are provided with grounds to build temporary houses, make gardens to help families survive while we are there.

Beside the Red Cross assistance we also try our best to find small ways to help ourselves financially, not just sitting with open hands and beg. From the small production we get from our gardens we also sell some and get a bit of income for our families. Women sew, weave, knit and sell to earn income to help not only the Refugees Communities in the Solomon Islands, but also to help establish Self Reliance Training Programmes at home in Bougainville. These are run by some of the Bougainvilleans who were educated and were training officers before the crisis.

One of the many reasons why I have remained in the Solomons is to facilitate humanitarian aid, medical supplies and to take care of the sick and the injured as they arrive from Bougainville.

Needs of refugees

We also acknowledge the Solomon Islands Government for allowing our children space in their schools to enable our children to get their education. We do find that this is another struggle to support our children by means of school fees. Though we have those problems parents struggle to find ways to support their children to get money for their children's school fees. This struggle will go on because school fees increase each year. Finance is the main problem.

We are thankful that some of the organisations came to visit the Refugee Communities. Such organisation are the 'Bougainville Freedom Movement', and some Australian Trade Unions. These groups are hoping to help in establishing an Assistance Programme for training opportunities for the refugee communities, and assisting in humanitarian aid. Even though these groups are going to assist in some ways, this does not allow us to sit back and do nothing, but we keep trying our best to support ourselves without having to wait to be served.

Although we are implementing Self Reliance Programme while in the Solomons, Papua New Guinea continues to press the Solomon Islands Government to get us out of the country.

Our greatest wish would be to go back to our island and be reunited with all our relatives and friends, but we cannot do that as yet because of the fighting that is still going on in our island. We, the mothers and children of Bougainville, are too frightened to risk our lives returning to an area where fighting is still going on.

Peace and justice

Peace cannot be achieved without justice. Justice must be seen in addressing the legitimate aspirations of the people of Bougainville. Without justice to the people of Bougainville there can never be any early ending to the current war.

We really long to see peace, hope and justice on Bougainville for now and the future. We want our children to go to school and be educated, receive good health services and travel freely in a peaceful atmosphere.

I therefore join with all the other women on Bougainville to appeal to our sisters and brothers from all over the world and to the United Nations to help us pressure the Papua New Guinea Government, or mediate for:

1. *Complete withdrawal of all PNG forces from Bougainville soil;*
2. *Bougainvilleans to reconcile and become one again;*
3. *One Bougainville people to sit and discuss with the PNG Government and decide their future;*
4. *The holding of a referendum to decide our political future.*

I strongly believe that when this is done, then peace will come to Bougainville. Then those of us that are refugees in other lands would be able to sail happily home to a peaceful environment.

We, the mothers and children living in the Solomon Islands and within the PNG blockade, or in Free Bougainville want nothing else but long-lasting peace.

This, I believe, is the same desire that the women and mothers in PNG-occupied areas of Bougainville are longing for.

Conclusion

Women too have a voice, an important voice in the social, cultural, economic and political issues of Bougainville. We are the custodians and the life-line of our societies through our matrilineal heritage, and in our positions in society.

We have faced and experienced the brunt of this war through the loss of normal life in which we have not been able to nurture our families.

Abuses, atrocities and violations are continuing this very moment against our persons by those that have only tried to pursue their own self-interests without due consideration of the rights of the individual and the rights of the people of Bougainville as a whole.

We, the Bougainville women, deplore the continuation of this senseless war. We also impress upon those that have assisted the government of Papua New Guinea in terms of military assistance, finance and military training - that this has only unnecessarily prolonged the sufferings of the women, children and ordinary civilians on Bougainville.

We would also like to see PROACTIVE ACTIONS towards negotiation of a political settlement and an end to the war by all parties, that is the BIG, BRA, BTG (Bougainville Transitional Government which covers the PNG-controlled areas) and the Papua New Guinea Government.

Any assistance from our neighbours such as Australia, the Solomon Islands, the international community such as International Human Rights Organisations and the United Nations is also welcome.

In the words of one of the women in Central Bougainville to the Bougainville Interim Government in 1991 in a meeting at Rorocnang:

> *We the women of Bougainville do not run around with guns in the bush like you men do,... but the pain that we feel for Bougainville, is just like the pain we feel when we give birth to a new baby. We want to give birth to a new Bougainville...*

Note

[1] The article is based on a speech delivered at the Women's Forum in Sydney, Australia in 1996.

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NAGA WOMEN: A STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

by Shimreichon Luithui

The Nagas are composed of about 42 tribes who occupy the mountainous country called the Patkai Range. It lies between the Ningthi (Chindwin) and the Brahmaputra plains in the north eastern part of India. About one third of this land came under the British in 1879, the remaining two thirds were then designated as 'no man's land' and later, divided between India and Myanmar (then Burma). This is how the Naga territory came to be under two sovereign independent countries, i.e. India and Myanmar.

The Naga people want to live together as a people. For the last 44 years the Naga people's struggle for unification of all the Naga territories and their right to self-determination has been met with brutal state repression. Like many of the other national movements in the Indian subcontinent, Naga national movement has been put down with force and alien state and legal systems have been foisted on the Naga people by the successive governments of India. The present generation has been born and raised in a near war-like situation.

Given such situation, the questions confronting us are: How have the Naga women in the states of Manipur and Nagaland responded to the State's repression? How have they put up an organised struggle to safeguard their lives and properties? What impact do the women's actions have? In the present paper the issue of Naga women's struggle for respect for human rights is examined in the light of such queries. My article will mainly focus on the two very strong Naga women's organisations - the Tangkhul Shanao Long (i.e. Tribal Women's Council) in Manipur and the Naga Mothers' Association in Nagaland - who have been in the forefront in the struggle for the restoration of human rights in addition to many other activities.

Status of Naga women

For centuries, the Naga people have been practising two kinds of agriculture - Jhum (slash and burn) cultivation and plough cultivation on terraced fields which require irrigation. Over 70 percent of the Nagas are still engaged in the two types of cultivation. Women bear the brunt of the work in the fields such as hoeing, transplantation and weeding. They are also engaged in weaving, knitting for their family and also for earning some cash. Apart from which almost all the household maintenance work also falls on the woman, who happens to be the wife and mother. She is often helped by her children in the domestic work but in villages where there are no schools or the schools are only up to primary levels, Naga mothers have been deprived of these helping hands as their children are being sent to towns for their studies. Education has been given primary importance, so except for very few families, most of the parents have sent away their children to the towns for their schooling.

The practice of giving preference to the sons over the daughters for getting education is being done away with in recent years. The female literacy rate is quite high as compared to all India literacy rate. According to 1991 census, male literacy is 66.27 per cent and female literacy is 54.51 per cent in Nagaland. (All India literacy rate is 39.19 per cent only). Educated Naga women are engaged in almost all the fields as doctors, nurses, teachers in schools and colleges, bureaucrats, clerks, researchers, lawyers and a very minuscule number of them are also engaged in petty trades.

Naga society practises patrilinial system, where descent is traced through the male line. Property is also inherited in the male line and it is always a son who succeeds his father as the head of the clan or lineage. Daughters cannot hold these positions, neither could they inherit immoveable properties. In recent years some parents have started giving immovable properties such as land and house to their daughters but they are not part of the ancestral property which has been passed down from the male line. They are properties bought and aquired by the parents themselves.

Despite women being highly educated and occupying important positions, political parties and organisations are still dominated by men. Less than a handful of the women are in electoral politics. This reflects Naga women's position in decision making where they have no say. Women may have some influence at the family level but in most cases it is the man who takes the decision. At the village level also, women have no place in the traditional village council. This applies to almost all the tribal communities of the Indian subcontinent.

Situation in Naga inhabited areas

It is more than 40 years now since independent India started introducing a plethora of draconian acts in the Naga territories.

In 1953, the Assam Maintenance of Public Order (Autonomous Districts) Act was promulgated in the Naga Hills. Then in 1955, the Assam Disturbed Areas Act was passed. This was followed by the promulgation of the Armed Forces (Assam-Manipur) Special Powers Ordinance in May 1958. In September 1958, after a mere three hours discussion in the Lok Sabha (Lower House of the Indian Parliament) and four hours discussion in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House), the Parliament converted it into the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act (AFSPA). All these acts were promulgated to put down the Naga National movement. In 1972, the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act was amended as the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act to cover all the seven states of North-East India. Since its enactment in 1958, the Naga areas have been under the AFSPA intermittently.

This Act gives the security personnel unfettered powers. Under the Act, even a non-commissioned officer is granted the right to shoot to kill on the mere assumption that it is necessary to do so in order to maintain public order and need only give such due warning as he may consider necessary. It also gives the security personnel the right to enter houses, search, and arrest without warrant. The Act gives near total immunity to the armed forces for their actions for no prosecution suit or other legal proceeding can be brought against any personnel acting under the Act without permission of the Central Government.

Unfortunately the Supreme Court in its recent judgment has upheld the Act despite the fact that such kind of license given to the security personnel has led to innumerable instances of violations committed against civilian populations. There is no Naga family which has not been touched by suffering. In such kinds of situation

Naga mother. Photo: Courtesy IDRC, Canada

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women suffer most. They are in constant fear of being assaulted, raped by the security personnel or their men being picked up for interrogation. Once picked up, some of them may never come back. Those who do come back after being tortured by the security personnel, have an existence similar to that of a vegetable. Many Naga women have had to watch their men die slowly despite all their care and nursing. Those who have survived can no longer do any hard labour. So the whole responsibility of meeting the needs of the family, their survival, falls on the shoulders of the women[1].

The Tangkhul Shanao Long

The need to form an all women association came about when many women from the villages in the south-eastern part of the East District (Ukhrul District) were assaulted and raped by the security personnel during combing operations in March 1974. Many Naga women had already born the brunt of the strategy to use rape as an instrument of power by the armed forces. But the brutality and assault that accompanied mass rape of women from different villages at different points of time in the course of two days of March 1974 surpassed all earlier incidences of rape. (This record was broken in July - October 1987 by the Assam Rifles, during the 'Operation Bluebird' in Oinam and 30 other surrounding villages of Manipur).

During the 1974 combing operations by the 95 Border Security Force (BSF), women were used as soft targets to emasculate the Naga Nation. It was not enough for the security personnel to stop at rounding up the villagers, looting and torturing menfolk. They raped many women and in one of the instances, the BSF personnel went to the extent of putting a stick in the vagina of one of the victims from Grihang village after she was raped. This victim was brought to Ukhrul district hospital, bleeding profusely. Another rape victim, Ms. Rose, an 18 year old girl of Ngaprum (Kumram) village, committed suicide after she was raped by the BSF officers in front of the village elders. She could not bear the shame and humiliation. As the injured and rape victims were brought to the Ukhrul District Hospital, and the news of Ms. Rose's death reached Ukhrul, there was anger, resentment and a sense of outrage all around. Women and men came out on the streets to condemn the barbaric acts of 95 BSF personnel. Public meetings and rallies were held. Demands were made to bring the culprits to book.

It was in one of these meetings that the East District Women's Association (EDWA) was formed to protect and promote the fundamental rights and dignity of the Naga people in general and that of Naga women in particular. In 1979, EDWA was renamed as the Tangkhul Shanao Long (TSL). Ever since the coming together of the Ukhrul District women, the TSL has grown in every aspect, even though the struggle for respect of human rights has remained the main agenda due to continued violation of human rights by the armed forces. The TSL has its branches in all the Tangkhul Naga villages. All the adult Tangkhul Naga women are members. Mobilisation for its activities is carried out at the village level which in turn sends representatives to the TSL annual gatherings or whenever required. The TSL's main office is in Ukhrul. Its day to day functions are carried out by the president and the secretary of the organisation who are elected for a three years and a four years term, respectively.

Struggling for the respect of human rights

Most of TSL's activities have been centered around the struggle for the respect of human rights due to continued human rights atrocities perpetrated by the armed forces. In this regard, the TSL has been playing both the role of mediator and organising protest march, rallies, plus literally saving their menfolk from being taken away by the armed forces to their camps.

On August 15, 1993, there was a crude bomb blast in Phungreitang, Ukhrul, around 9 a.m. Fortunately, nobody was hurt, but as usual, the security personnel, in this case, the Assam Rifles (AR), went berserk beating up the men, entering houses, breaking many doors. When women of Ukhrul town came to know about this, around one thousand of them came out on the streets and marched towards Phungreitang. The AR fired at random to prevent women from coming close to where victims were being loaded. But despite the shootings, the women moved forward to rescue their men, managing to pull out most of them. In this incident, seven women got bullet injuries, most of them on their hips and thighs. Two seriously injured were taken to Imphal for surgery, the rest were hospitalised in Ukhrul. In another incident, on July 17, 1997, which took place in the aftermath of an ambush by members of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM[2]) on an AR convoy, many men from Ukhrul town were rounded up and kept in the AR camps. Three AR personnel were injured in this incident. Once again, the AR personnel went on a rampage in the locality where the ambush had taken place. They entered houses, assaulted men and women with rifle butts and batons, broke doors and window-panes including cupboards. The Savio school run by Catholic nuns was not spared either. Teachers and students were ordered out of the class rooms and the staff room. The male teachers were beaten up in front of the students. That day, more than 21 men were admitted to the Ukhrul District hospital. Most of them with head injuries. As the AR personnel went rampaging the Ukhrul town, people were traumatized, there was so much fear. All the shops were closed, people stayed inside the house, some ran to the jungle or to the next village to avoid being caught by the security personnel.

It is in this kind of situation that members of TSL along with other organisations come out to instil confidence in the people. On July 17, besides intervening with the AR officers for the release of the civilians in which 40 of them were released, they also went and requested the shopkeepers to open the shops. Along with the civil administrative officers, they appealed to all the stranded people to go home, since it was safe to stir out. These kinds of activities were of great help in bringing a semblance of normalcy in what had looked like a ghost town.

The TSL also often goes on fact finding missions along with other Tangkhul Naga organisations like the Tangkhul Naga Tribe Council, students' organisations, church leaders and the Naga People's Movement for Human Rights. In 1982, TSL also organised an all India women fact finding team, which was made up of different women's organisations in main land India.

Besides these activities the TSL also carries out relief work during calamities, mostly men made, and committed by the armed forces. For instance, in March 1996, when 103 houses out of 107 were burnt down in Huishu village in Ukhrul district by the armed forces, TSL also organised food and clothing for the victims as well as a fact finding mission.

The TSL also organises income generating training programmes such as weaving, knitting and stitching for the TSL members. Naga women in general are very good weavers, so TSL also promotes revival of their traditional designs, and simultaneously encourages the development of new designs through competitions. During their annual gatherings, traditional games and folk dances are organised to help the younger generation in rediscovering them.

In recent years, TSL has also been playing a prominent role in the discussions on Naga issues at the Naga National level, which used to be represented by only the apex body of the various Naga tribe councils made up of men. The District Civil Administration also consults them on important social issues.

The Naga Mothers' Association

The Naga Mothers' Association (MNA) was formed in February 1984 at Kohima, with its office in the same town. The NMA's main aims and objectives are to serve as a channel of communication for Naga women's mutual interest and welfare; to raise the consciousness of people towards responsible living and human development; to eradicate social evils and exploitation; to promote active participation in the socio-political life of the Nagas and to maintain peaceful living; to create interest in the traditional socio-political life of the Nagas and to maintain self-identity, self-reliance and honesty.

Membership of the NMA is open to any Naga mother or adult Naga woman. Most of its membership is organised through the apex women's organisation of each tribe. It has 10 office bearers - a president, three vice presidents, a secretary, three joint secretaries, a treasurer and a vice treasurer, elected for a tenure of four years.

The NMA from the time of its formation, has been doing a yeoman's job to reduce social evils such as alcoholism and drug addiction in the Nagaland state. Through its persistent efforts, Nagaland state has been declared as a 'dry state' since 1989. Apart from organising awareness campaigns, NMA has set up a de-addiction and rehabilitation centre called Mount Geliad Home in the outskirts of Kohima. And for the Home's efficient functioning, NMA has collaborated with experts from Kripa Foundation in Bombay. NMA also plans to set up an Aids Hospice. This rehabilitation home was the first of its kind in the North East region. In Nagaland, many families have been afflicted by the drug addiction problem of their children. The reason for the high rate of drug addiction has been attributed to factors such as the turbulent political situation in Nagaland - there is a constant threat of being picked up by the security personnel for interrogation which inevitably means harassment and torture. There is uncertainty and psychological tension as every Naga is a suspect in the eyes of the armed forces in their homeland. This kind of mental disturbances has made the youth an easy prey to drug addiction. Besides, there is easy money. A lot of money has been pumped into the state by the Government of India. On top of this, the drugs are easily available due to Nagaland state being contiguous to the Burmese border and thus close to the Golden Triangle.

NMA's other programme is afforestation and conservation. In 1986, they took up social tree plantations and trees were planted in the school compounds in Kohima town and in the town's outskirts. Further, in order to carry forward such kind of activities, during their general assembly in 1994, NMA took the decision for each Naga mother to plant one tree. NMA had planned to take up many related programmes such as tree plantation competitions in all the eight districts of Nagaland but this could not be realised due to the turbulent political situation in Nagaland.

In recent years, NMA has come to be more and more involved in political issues. They feel that a peaceful and conducive atmosphere needs to be created in order to find lasting solutions to the Naga political issue. Accordingly, the NMA has been working with the other Naga organisations to reduce the violence and brutalisation in the Naga society which are mainly caused by atrocities committed by the armed forces and partly by factional fightings. NMA observed a Mourning Day on August 5, 1994, for all the deaths that had taken place in the Naga territories. It has also organised rallies and come out with an appeal to all sections of people to 'shed no more blood'. This slogan has been printed on badges and has been widely circulated. NMA also coordinates with different churches in Nagaland, organises shawls[3] and coffins to give respectable burial to the unclaimed dead bodies. Further, NMA has been actively participating in the meetings and conferences along with the Naga Students' Federation (NSF), the Naga People's Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR) and the traditional decision making body viz. the Federation of Naga Tribe Councils (Naga Hohos), to strengthen the peace initiative through a cease-fire between the Government of

India (GOI) and the NSCN-IM and to get all the Nagas to participate in the dialogue[4].

Earlier NMA had also come to Delhi as part of 12 high powered delegates belonging to the Naga Hohos, NSF and NPMHR, to articulate the voice of the Naga people - to urge the GOI to defer the elections in the Naga inhabited areas. This was in order to facilitate the ongoing talks between GOI and the Naga National leaders in a peaceful and conducive atmosphere and to extend the cease fire period.

Concluding remarks

Summing up we can say that through their organised struggles, the TSL and NMA have gained recognition. Subsequently, women are playing a more and more active role on the larger Naga national issues. In Manipur, too, there is an all Naga women's organisation - Naga Women's Union, Manipur (NWUM) - which was formed in October 1995. NWUM has also been actively participating in the discussions on the political developments that are taking place in the Naga areas and decision making at the national level.

But at the individual level, Naga women still have a long way to go to play an equal part with their counterparts in decision making as well as in terms of heriditary rights.

Notes

[1] In eastern Nagaland too (under Myanmar), the suffering and sense of insecurity of the Naga people is no less. There is heavy deployment of Burmese armed forces or Tatmadaw (literally 'the main army') in the area. Regular operations are being carried out by the Tatmadaw against the civilians which have led to desolation of Naga villages. Many Naga refugees have crossed over into the Naga areas on the Indian side. There have been persistent reports of Naga villagers being arrested and taken away to work as porters or labourers on road construction projects along the border.

[2] There are two NSCN factions: NSCN-Isaac-Muivah (NSCN-IM) and NSCN-Khaplang (NSCN-K).

[3] Covering the bodies with shawls before burial is a traditional practice among the Naga people.

[4] Cease-fire between the two parties has been in effect since August 1, 1997, and in the last few months, political dialogue has been going on.

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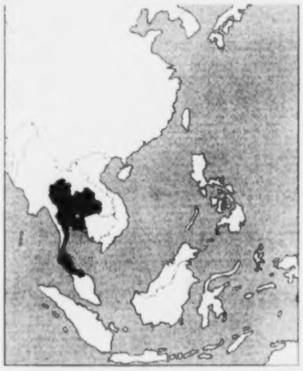
THE CHALLENGE OF MODERN CHANGES

Article 22 of the Beijing Declaration

> *We demand that the international community and governments recognise and respect our rights to our territories. This includes our right to decide what to do with our lands and territories and to develop in an integrated, sustainable way, according to our own cosmovision.*

HILL TRIBE WOMEN OF THAILAND: WHERE TO TURN NOW?

by Anchalee Phonklieng



The mountainous regions of northern Thailand have an interesting note as they are home to nine officially recognised indigenous communities, preferably and better known as the hill tribe peoples. Each of these communities has its own systems of belief, languages, customs and traditions. The Department of Public Welfare in Thailand in 1995 estimated that there is a total population of 783,911 hill tribe people, concentrated mainly in the upper northern provinces.

These indigenous communities, isolated for centuries due to the difficult terrain and inaccessibility to communication, are now slowly beginning to come into contact with mainstream society as a result of widespread tourism, pressure for resettlement, population growth and the need for formal education.

Six hill tribe groups, the Lisu (in Thai Lisaw), Mien (Yao), Lahu (Musser), Hmong (Meo), Pgakenyaw (Karen) and the Akha make up by far the majority of these peoples and are therefore those we will concentrate on for the purpose of this article. Each of these groups have their own complex social structures and rules which differ greatly from each other. However, when it comes to the status of women alarming trends can be seen across the board.

Tribal women: Ignored or forgotten

Tribal women are traditionally regarded as occupying a lower social standing than the men, even in the Karen and Lahu societies which have a matrilineal structure. Traditionally Karen and Lahu women occupy a higher status than the other hill tribe women which can be clearly seen by the more equal work division between the two sexes. However in recent years, especially from a developmental perspective, the status of all hill tribe women has deteriorated. As a result women are sometimes ignored or forgotten and their views never heard. In many development programmes, many of which have a direct impact on the women themselves, women never have the opportunity to receive the much-needed information and education, much less participate in the decision making process. It is often left to the mercy of men, usually the male village leaders, to decide and determine the fate of these women. In a very real sense hill tribe women therefore belong to a group of disadvantaged people within a very disadvantaged population.

As influences from local Thai and foreign cultures encroach onto tribal societies, it is imperative for women to gain knowledge and information about these forces and factors which affect their lives and their communities. These new influences include the introduction of formal education, public health care, development projects, infrastructure and modern agricultural techniques. Although many of these introduced developments will benefit the villages they are implemented in, they bring with them the added danger of a weakening or loss of traditional culture. The women of these societies have traditionally filled the role of not only nursing their families and in many cases extended families, but also of safeguarding their traditions and ensuring the continuity of their cultures. Thus any attempt to preserve these cultures must educate the women to allow them to better understand these new dangers and changing pressures.

The need for equal access to information and training

Current Thai laws and government policies are having an added, and in many cases, devastating impact on the lives of tribal communities. Effects of government policies include relocation of village communities, the constant unstable land ownership situation due mainly to a lack of understanding about indigenous peoples' rights and the curtailed use of the land for traditional hunting, gathering and the collection of traditional medicines. Historically, these changes have had both positive and negative effects on individuals and communities. Therefore it is imperative once again that they be fully understood by all members of the community, including the female members, so that informed decisions can be made when the community is faced with choices that affect the future of the group. At present, while men from tribal communities have limited opportunities to meet and discuss the possible effects of new influences on tribal life, even the sparse information about these changes are not made available to women. Often women are placed in a position where they must deal with new issues, influences and effects without an informed perspective. Even when programmes do allow for the input of women they are often scheduled at inconvenient times for women, when their roles as nurturers and carers must be fulfilled. Any serious attempt to gain the participation of these women in decision making processes must take into account the lives they lead and be scheduled accordingly.

Programmes must provide opportunities for women to learn to analyse changing situations and communicate with other women to allow knowledge sharing. Women must have equal access to information and training activities from both community and external organisations so that a situation where the men are the primary receivers and holders of information does not develop or persist. Unequal access to opportunities for education and personal development in favor of the men would result in an undesirable situation where the men could assume respectable positions and status as

Karen woman harvesting hill rice. Photo: Christian Erni

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'teachers' or 'experts' over women and vital information would not be openly available to all members of the community.

The negative impact of modern development

The work done by women has always differed from that done by the men. Traditionally this split has been more or less even with the women looking after cultivated fields and men hunting and doing the seasonal jobs such as burning and/or clearing fields. However, in Thailand, and probably in all developing countries, the introduction of new technology and the changing methods of agricultural systems have shown the potential for creating more work for the women. In communities that have adopted the 'modern' farming methods, agricultural work that used to be seasonal can now be performed all year round. Families that participate in cash cropping or other commercial farming to gain income for formal education, or other things, use irrigation of fields and/or chemicals and pesticides which enable year round farming. The extra work involved often falls to the women, who used to work only seasonally, and takes away time for rest or traditionally important activities such as weaving or embroidery.

The arrival of new methods, in retrospect, actually tends to widen the gap between the working hours performed by men and women, with more hard work being left to the women while the men may have more time to pursue education or other activities. Introduction of chemicals in agricultural production, which has been adopted by some villages in earnest, has led to devastating effects on both the health of the villages and the environmental problems already plaguing much of the north. Women are again among the most affected by this. Information about the long term effects of these chemicals must be made available to women's groups in these communities so that they have a clear understanding on the effects on their health and their surroundings.

This brings us to a very important aspect of the lives of the hill tribe women. Often adequate medical services are not provided to the villages. This situation is exacerbated by the increased workloads and can and does have devastating effects on women's health. Many women suffer from general pain associated with physical labours as well as increased complaints during pregnancy because of a forced inability to take proper care of their body during this time. In addition to the specific problems associated with hard physical labour, women in the villages tend to suffer from a wide range of health problems including respiratory diseases, digestive problems, mental health disorders, drug addiction and the ever growing threat of HIV/AIDS. As a result of the inadequate medical services these women often try to cure these problems themselves using a cheap form of antacid as a cure-all. When this is ingested everyday it has an addictive effect not to mention the fact that the original problems do not go away.

Again good, clear information is vital to women in these communities. Information which must cover every aspect of the newly introduced influences. This would go a long way towards lowering the instances of mental health problems as most are caused by worry about the future and worry about the effects that the changing lifestyles will have on their children. Living in such uncertainty is not an easy thing.

The promotion of family control and planning by the government in recent years to reduce population expansion has again denied information to women, who in this case are the primary targets. Hill tribe women are not educated on either the objective or effects of family planning, an immediate issue facing them due to a rapid population expansion and increasing lack of fertile lands. They are also not informed of the possible side effects of techniques such as the oral contraceptive pill and they routinely undergo hysterectomy operations with the knowledge that it will deny them the ability to bear children but without the other side effects being explained to them. In addition, the doctors' orders of rest and recuperation are often impossible to follow. Six months to two years of rest from farm work is just not realistic, and this has obvious and terrible effects on their health.

Environmental policies have inhumane consequences

In addition to the local problems facing these women there are huge pressures brought to bear on all members of these communities by forces from outside the country. Many international agencies have become involved in the north of Thailand driven out of concern for the environmental crisis or by the opium traditionally grown in this area. The environmental problem is by no means a small one as the deterioration of the natural forests and water catchment areas is alarming. However the resulting government policies have been to relocate people out of the affected areas and any other areas they have designated as a National Park or conservation area. The ability of the affected hill tribes to contest these policies is often curtailed by their uncertain citizenship status. Arbitrary resettlements of these highland people to lowland areas, void of respect for their rights, has resulted in them being settled in areas which are unsuitable for any sustainable agriculture and certainly unsuitable for the traditional methods which are so inextricably bound with their culture; in addition to this proper compensation is often not given. The results of these policies have thus worked against their possible positive effects and rendered the policies both harmful and inhumane to the populations concerned.

The effects of the collapse of agriculture on people who know only agricultural ways of life are devastating. These effects are more apparent for the women as they do not possess the knowledge and skills to make a living by other means. Many do not know the lowland language and communication poses huge difficulties for them. This results in them often becoming unskilled labourers on construction sites, hired farm hands and for some, commercial sex workers. Data from the Social Research Institute of Chiang Mai University reveals that most of the slum dwellers in Chiang Mai province are the resettled hill tribe people who have moved to the city in search of work. Due to their lack of resources coupled with the slum areas' inherent lack of basic infrastructure the newly settled migrants have to deal with the threat of drugs, poverty and in recent years, the emerging threat of HIV/AIDS.

The denial of citizenship rights

Some of the resettlement issues could be solved if the questions of formal nationality among the hill tribe communities could be answered. Those who in general practise permanent agriculture or can prove Thai ancestry and can speak the Thai language have or are entitled to Thai citizenship or identification cards. A qualification which is essential for purchase of land. In this too the women are disadvantaged as they often do not fulfill the requirements necessary for Thai citizenship. As mentioned before, many do not speak the Thai national language and there is a further qualification dependent on the amount of formal education a person has received. Once they have been denied their cards or citizenship status they are then denied all the basic rights inherent to any country. They will not be issued a health card and are therefore denied the right to visit the government health clinics. They have no way of obtaining the education needed as government schools are also closed to them. In short this denial of their rights places them in a dead end with no way to turn to improve their situations.

For those communities who have not been resettled there is increasing pressure on young women to leave their homes and obtain work in the city centres such as Bangkok and Chiang Mai to supplement their parents' incomes. This adds to the swell of those from unsuitable resettled lands and those who have had their lands declared national parks and thus drastically reduced the cultivable land areas, forcing some to migrate to the cities. Many hill tribe women can now be seen in Bangkok and they are increasingly visible in the Night Bazaar of Chiang Mai, selling handicrafts and woven items to tourists and visiting locals.

Conclusion

It can clearly be seen from the preceding description that the hill tribe women of north Thailand are indeed very disadvantaged. And, as long as they are living in these conditions and with such uncertainty about their futures, there can be no excuse for not realising the real problems they are facing and doing something about them. It is therefore a challenge to NGOs working in the area, the Thai government and the international agencies to see that this situation does not persist. A first urgent step would be to at least provide the hill tribe women with education and basic rights as this would go a long way to alleviating their suffering.

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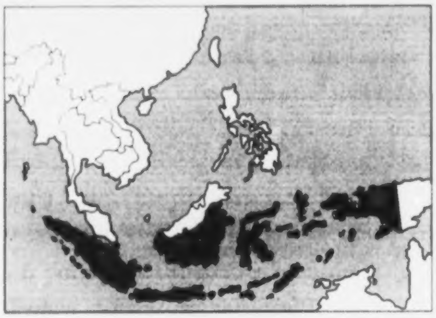
INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN INDONESIA: A PORTRAIT

By Arimbi H.P.



In Indonesia, awareness of the problems of indigenous peoples is still fairly limited. Indigenous peoples are regarded as isolated and worthless citizens who need to be uplifted or shoved aside. Their lifestyle is seen as backward and unfit for modern times. Sadly, such thinking also besets the minds of the country's political decision-makers.

The Ministry of Transmigration considers these peoples who are semi-sedentary farmers as destroyers of the forest, and have even implied that they were responsible for the forest fires that spread in different regions of Indonesia from July until December 1997. The policy of the Ministry is therefore to concentrate them in settlements. The Ministry of Social Affairs also views the indigenous peoples as backwards and in need of development. Unfortunately, the government approach to assisting indigenous peoples is in no way participative and therefore often fails to respond to the true needs of the people.

The educational system in Indonesia completely disregards local traditional knowledge, and indigenous culture is treated like a commodity to be used for tourism promotion. Most indigenous dances for example are in fact part of complex magico-religious systems and are therefore sacred. If the dances are performed only to attract tourists, those aspects disappear. For example, the *Hudoq* ceremony of the Dayak Bahau in Kalimantan is actually restricted to the planting season. However, because of the needs of tourism the traditional social context and timing of the rite are nowadays very often disregarded, and the Dayak Bahau are willing to perform their dances at the request of tourists for only 100 000 Rp (Widjono 1996).

With regard to women in general and indigenous women in particular, the situation is even worse. The Indonesian state started to acknowledge the special needs and problems of women in the course of the past decade. However, the government systematically misinterprets emancipatory movements and is responding in purely negative and even cynical ways: the women's movement is represented as being anti-male. Though the status of women (as it is mirrored in the Constitution) is supposed to be one of *Mitra Suami* (i.e. husband's partner), women are nevertheless deprived of equal human rights. Indigenous peoples and women alike continue to be considered inferior to other groups of citizens, and the prevailing social conditions in Indonesia do not favour them.

Indigenous peoples in the Indonesian context

The support movement for indigenous peoples only started in 1993. At that time a group of activists and indigenous people gathered in a workshop conducted by the environmental organisation WALHI (Wahana Lingkungan Hidup, Indonesian Environmental Forum) on 'Legal Resource Development for Indigenous Peoples Concerning Natural Resource Management in Forest Areas Outside Java'. Their purpose was to devise ways to let local communities share in the benefits of the management of forests and their resources[1].

During their discussions, the group discovered that the basic problem is not the local peoples themselves, but the fact that the very existence of indigenous peoples in Indonesia is not officially acknowledged. One of the primary concerns at the workshop therefore became the formulation of a definition of indigenous peoples in the Indonesian context. By channelling the needs of various indigenous peoples, such a definition of indigenousness was supposed to have a catalysing function for the formulation of the demand for indigenous rights in Indonesia.

It was established that the term 'indigenous peoples' equalled the notion of *masyarakat adat*, or peoples with distinct cultural traditions. Another translation of the term which is fairly popular in advocacy circles is 'vulnerable peoples', stressing their marginality and powerlessness in the context of state expansion and development.

Masyarakat adat renders best the meaning of 'indigenous peoples' as employed by the international indigenous movement, and is also important because of its neutrality. Previously Indonesia's indigenous peoples were referred to in the official discourse by discriminating and intimidating terms like 'primitive peoples', 'forest destroyers' or 'backward people'.

In spite of the fact that the meaning of the word 'indigenous people' is starting to be better known amongst activists, it has not yet reached other groups of the population or even indigenous groups at the village level. Indigenous peoples in Kalimantan never considered themselves as *masyarakat adat* but only as Dayak, differentiated into a host of sub-ethnic groups like Dayak Samihin, Dayak Siang, Dayak Benuaq. The same is true for the indigenous peoples of southern Sumatra to whom the relevant social unit was and is the *marga* (family group), rather than some oppositional category like 'indigenous peoples'. Traditional people in NTT (Nusa Tenggara Timur, the string of islands extending from Sumba Island to East Timor) tend to identify as *suku* (tribe) like suku Anawaru, suku Nippa, suku Katinah, etc.

The legal context

The state's notion of indigenous peoples is both messy and contradictory. This becomes clear when we look at the Indonesian Constitution UUD 1945[2] which outlines their rights and at other legislation which dilutes or confirms these rights.

The Article 18 of the Constitution actually provides a genuine basis to honouring *adat* (local customary law) rights. It states: 'The subdivision of the Indonesian territory into smaller and larger parts has to be included in the basic law, according to joint resolutions and the privileges of autonomous regions'. Obviously this is a concession to the existence of traditional policies and legal regimes, derived from various political systems of ethnic groups throughout Indonesia. Autonomous regions have their own rules that should not be applied to other regions and vice versa. In UUD 1945, villages in Bali, Java, Nagari in Minangkabau and villages in Palembang amongst others, are defined as autonomous entities.

It should be kept in mind that the Constitution occupies the highest position also in the hierarchy of Indonesian laws, so any laws added later are subordinate to the constitution[3]. Yet the facts tell another story and the provision in Article 18 has been diluted by a series of laws, or *undang-undang* (UU). For example the forest laws were compounded by governmental regulations about industrial forest plantations, by mining laws and local government laws.

UU No. 5, 1979 about village governments establishes and explicates the superiority of the state over the village and its *masyarakat* *adat*. The concept of the *desa* (Javanese village) in these regulations forces the village governments outside Java to adopt Javanese structures. Indigenous organisational forms like the *nagari* of the Minangkabau of western Sumatra, village councils in Kalimantan and Sulawesi, or *temukung* on the Leusseur Islands[4] are not acknowledged by the government and therefore transformed to make it fit the *desa* concept. In this new political form they have to adapt to the operational mechanisms of the nation-state. The *Kepala Desa* (village chief) governs according to national law, overruling existing traditional laws. Self-regulatory mechanisms of adat have therefore ceased to function.

The access of indigenous peoples to natural resources like forests is becoming more and more problematic. UU No. 5, 1967, concerning forestry does not recognise indigenous peoples' ownership rights to their forests. Adat forests are considered to be national patrimony. The state is therefore authorised to assume ownership of the adat forests and expropriate indigenous communities without or with only token compensation.

With UU No. 17, 1967, concerning mining the question of the exploitation of natural resources has become a state issue. In consequence, the local populations are denied the right to derive their livelihood from their ancestral forests. Consequently the indigenous peoples have lost their basis of life. These conflicts have recurrently resulted in confrontations between the indigenous peoples, the state and private companies.

On the other hand, two laws were recently passed that confirm the existence of indigenous peoples: UU No. 10, 1992, concerning Population and the Security of the Family, and UU No. 5, 1994, by which the Biodiversity Convention was ratified.

UU No. 10, 1992, in particular brought hope to indigenous activists and their advocates since this law acknowledges the right of any citizen to "develop" his/her culture, to develop his/her own capabilities, the right to use their adat territory and the right to cultivate and develop their own cultural norms. Unfortunately these acknowledgements are still vague with regard to their goals and hard to enforce in everyday life and development practice.

The position of indigenous women

Adequate protection and social status for indigenous women has not been achieved in Indonesia. Furthermore, indigenous women's inferior status as women in often male-dominated or outright patriarchal local societies adds to their difficulties.

On the local level, women are hardly ever a part of the processes and structures of decision-making in indigenous societies. Among the Ngovi/Moi in Central Sulawesi, for instance, there are three types of adat leaders who dominate the political arena in different functions: the *totua nuboya* mediates quarrels in the group and he also represents the local group to the outside world; *bangunasa* are the specialists who decide which parts of the forest are going to be cut to obtain more agricultural land, and they head all the agricultural ceremonies; and *totuanungana* is the leader who guides everyday life. Even though there are no explicit rules excluding women, the offices of the three adat leaders are always filled by male persons. In none of the decisions made by the elders in general and the three leader-types in particular, Ngovi/Moi women are really consulted. This is unfortunate because they could contribute with valuable and relevant experiences. In the agricultural field, for example, women have considerably more knowledge of plant varieties as well as of the healing powers of medicinal plants.

Women are also rarely allowed to take part in the consultation process aimed at consolidating the opposition against the government's aggressive development policies. This for example was the case of the *marga* (family group) Benakat in southern Sumatra where land was confiscated for an industrial plantation.

There are some exceptions. For instance the case of the masyarakat adat of North Sumatra where women enjoy equal rights with men as evidenced by several of their customs. These women energetically defend their dry fields from attacks of investors and go to court to defend their rights and property, even if this entails a trip of several hundred kilometres to Jakarta.

Likewise the Sumbanese mothers in Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) whose village was set under water by the building of the Kabaniru dam, also travelled long distances to set up a network between the villages. They even sent a delegation for Jakarta to present their claims.

Another example is Mama Yosepha from the Amungme tribe in Irian Jaya who forced an eye-to-eye meeting on Jim Moffet, the powerful president of Freeport McMoran, the gold mining giant which confiscated the land of the Amungme and the Komoro tribe.

Woman activist from LBBT (Lembaga Bina Benua Talino), a Dayak organisation in West Kalimantan, at a human rights workshop in Pusat Damai, Sanggau, West Kalimantan. Photo: Danilo Geiger

Mama Yosepha is the leader of all the Amungme clans and has been bold enough to sue Freeport McMoran in the United States.

Still and in spite of these examples, indigenous women's groups all over Indonesia are slow in forming, and where they are taking shape, they still have to learn to formulate successful strategies and create networks.

The impact of development

The effects of the so-called development on indigenous women are not negligible. For the peasant majority of Indonesians, the loss of their fields means the loss of their life. Agriculture has always been the domain of wisdom of indigenous women. Dani women in Irian Jaya for example can identify 70 different kinds of cassava tubers, and the Moi women in central Sulawesi can identify 40 different medical plants. If the local communities lose their ancestral territories, these women's knowledge becomes meaningless.

Industrial development in Indonesia like industrial timber production monopolised by HPH (Himpunan Perkembangan Hutan, lumber companies) and HTI (Hutan Tanaman Industri, industrial tree plantations), leads to loss of land for the indigenous peoples. Indigenous women are losing their source of life, their protection and their self confidence on a massive scale. Without farming as their only skill, they are forced to accept any work to survive. In a lot of HPH areas in Kalimantan many Dayak women are 'temporarily married', a euphemism for prostitution: they are 'married' to company workers and abandoned as soon as the latter's work contract is finished. The numerous children from these marriages are called *anak ASEAN* (ASEAN kids) in Kalimantan villages. Before HPH came to Kalimantan, there was no prostitution, but now it is spreading. In NTT the loss of land forces many men to look for work in other islands, even though it is unlikely that they will find it. Their wives and children who are left behind try to deal with the situation. But it is a shocking fact that most prostitutes in Indonesia come from NTT.

If the access of indigenous peoples to their land is not guaranteed any more, their cultural practices are bound to change. Indigenous peoples usually live in tightly-knit communities, a fact that sometimes finds expression in communal dwellings like the Dayak longhouses and bachelors' dwellings. The government now provides them with new settlements. But these settlements are located in villages set up for the transmigrants[5] and towns (one family, one house), which leads to the loss of mutual solidarity. The longhouses of Kalimantan are home to up to 40 families and function also as meeting places. If the longhouse is replaced by one-family houses, social life loses its anchor and discussion its public space, so that the local groups cannot take collective decisions any more. The loss of this important social function makes Dayak communities more prone to manipulation.

The destruction of the longhouses also weakens the position of Dayak women in the household. As long as they are still living in the longhouse with the other families, the burden of everyday life can be shared and female social networks activated.

Epilogue

The difficult situation of indigenous women in Indonesia could become even worse in the next few decades. First of all, they have to become aware of their own situation, in order to be able to defend their own rights and their place in society. Therefore there is a need for unity and organised action of indigenous women.

At present the biggest obstacle to this goal is the unresponsive and even repressive Indonesian government. In spite of the fact that the freedom of assembly and to form organisations is actually enshrined in the Constitution, organisations are often confronted with the iron fist of the military.

Another constraint is that the gender issue is not yet at this moment a priority for activists. The NGO movement is still too busy talking about such basic things as freedom of press, democracy, establishing workers unions, etc. The task of organising women in Indonesia is a challenge that the movement is not yet ripe for.

Notes

[1] The collaboration of the activists with indigenous peoples has continued and they have developed the network JAPHAMA for the Defense of Indigenous Rights.

[2] UUD means Undang Undang Dasar or Constitution.

[3] The hierarchy of Indonesian laws is the following: Constitution UUD 1945, MPRdecisions, UU (laws), presidential decrees and executive regulations like ministerial decrees.

[4] Leusseur Islands consist of three provinces: Bali, Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB) and Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT)

[5] The Indonesian government has for many years implemented an extensive transmigration scheme from the overpopulated islands (especially Java) to less populated regions like, for instance, Irian Jaya and Kalimantan.

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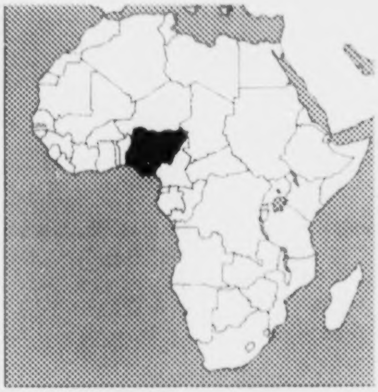
***Arimbi Heroepoetri** graduated in 1990 from Dalhousie Law School, Canada, with a master thesis on Environmental Impact Assessment Regime. Currently she is a deputy director of WALHI, a forum of 400 environmental NGOs in Indonesia. She is also one of the founders of JAPHAMA.*

INDIGENOUS UKPIOVWIN WOMEN OF DELTA STATE, NIGERIA: THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPMENT

by Dr. Mabel I.E. Tobrise



The village of Ukpiovwin is located in the Udu Clan of Udu Local Government Area of Delta State, southern Nigeria. It is surrounded by rivers and creeks, several of which also run through the land of the village.

The approximate population is three thousand. The population of women and children outnumber that of men. The people belong to the Urhobo group, and Ukpiovwin land falls within the Urhobo region, and is bordered by Ijaw and other Urhobo clans on all sides. Petroleum, the backbone of the Nigerian economy, is exploited from Urhobo land.

In Africa, the physical land is also equated with the people. To us, our identity is tied to our saying that the earth hardly rejects its own.

The major language spoken is Urhobo, of the Ughievwen or Udu dialect, which has a musical lilt that differentiates it from other Urhobo dialects. Pidgin English is also a major form of communication in the village.

The status of women in Ukpiovwin

Present day Ukpiovwin women are culturally alienated. Pidgin English has eroded much of the Urhobo language spoken in the land. Although the location is Ukpiovwin, Urhobo folklore and tradition face the threat of extinction because our women and mothers no longer tell to children, those stories which formed the traditional psyche of children in times past. We have therefore to face the fact that the customs of our people are indeed signposts to a sustainable future.

The Ukpiovwin women practise the African traditional faith and Christianity. Shrines to indigenous Gods are still visible today in Ukpiovwin even with the presence of about six churches of different denominations.

Ukpiovwin children enjoy early childhood education, but boys benefit more than girls because the drop-out rate is higher among the latter. The major factor responsible for the high drop-out rate among girl children, earlier than boy children, is not really poverty, but early marriage. It is not strange to find girls in their teens married off in order for parents to secure bride wealth from in-laws.

Male control of female sexuality through genital mutilation or female circumcision is still practised in some lineages. A woman's moral status in her marital home is predicated on whether genital mutilation was carried out on her before the delivery of her first child or not. A different kind of control is evident in the pressure on wives to bear male children for their husbands.

Again women hardly inherit property as daughters, where there are sons. One area where gender-sensitivity occurs in Urhobo land is in the area of traditional titles of authority. Yet, Ukpiovwin women are seldom accorded recognition by the giving of community titles. The fact that women have titles, like the *Okpako Eya* or Head of Women title does not mean they have enough authority in the land or village to take many decisions. They are still subordinate to men in the village. There are also women who are accorded recognition as mothers of the village due to their age and status. This recognition makes them to be regarded as *Oni*, or mother. Other forms of recognition are linked with cultic hierarchy. Even when they bear titles, women, however, still do not affect the patriarchal power structures of the land. The extended family system is still dominant in this sleepy rural community.

Widowhood practices adversely affect our women. Fellow women (in-laws) inflict indignities on bereaved wives.

Women in the village have been at the receiving end of inter-communal clashes in the area for some time. Peace options should be entrenched in the local politics of Ukpiovwin Land. The perpetrators of conflicts are men, the profiteers are men, but the women and children are victims, often dispossessed.

Seeking to overcome

This background informs the status of wives, mothers and other women who form the totality of indigenous Ukpiovwin women. Marriage is seen as an instrument of patriarchy because through it, many women, who in ordinary circumstances would not do so, subjugate their will to those of their husbands, fathers and other male members of the clan.

The general work of Ukpiovwin women is controlled by men. It is a fact that Urhobo women are acclaimed for their prowess where work is concerned. Polygamy has greatly encouraged women to work because of family (children) security. Even when their work is domestic, women do more work than men who enjoy more periods of leisure than women do in the village.

Despite the dominance of patriarchy, Ukpiovwin women seek to rise above their disadvantaged situation. They farm, fish, trade and engage in cottage industry work but still find themselves caught in the cycle of poverty and dispossession. Ukpiovwin women depend on land and the forest for survival.

As farmers the women of Ukpiovwin obtain land through right of usufruct, inheritance or purchase. But they need to own more land, have rights of tenure, be self-reliant and Land Use policies should be made to favour women. In the company of hired hands or members of their families especially their children, these women cultivate cassava, the major tuber crop. They suffer a handicap because their labour is unskilled and unpaid for. What is produced is mainly for domestic consumption and the very little that is left for exchange for money. These indigenous women have no access to farm input or advice from agricultural extension workers.

In recent times also, farming has become fraught with certain ecological problems like oil spillage from burst oil pipes, gas flaring and the general ecocide perpetrated by oil companies engaged in oil exploration activities.

The few percent of the population engaged in fish-farming no longer see any profitable future in this act. Harsh environmental problems of erosion and pollution have made fish for subsistence difficult to catch. Moreover, these women lack present-day technology to keep abreast modern fishing methods. The use of dug-outs and canoes is dated. Moreover the danger of boats capsizing due to laid out pipes is high. Due to lack of capital, most women even with

The initial stage in Garri processing: the peeling of the cassava.
Photo: Mabel I. E. Tobrise

the formation of co-operatives cannot purchase speed boats which can go farther out to sea.

Trading holds many more prospects for the women of Ukpiovwin, although very few belong to co-operative societies. Petty trading is common among the indigenous women, who travel to Warri, a major urban centre in Delta State, for their wares. Trading has so far not been an exciting venture. Most women spend both the profit and capital for the upkeep of their families, their major responsibility. The roads which link Ukpiovwin to Warri, Aldja and other towns in the environs are hardly motorable. Many women resort to trekking when fares are hiked by transporters due to bad roads.

The women of Ukpiovwin also engage in cottage industry, especially in the production of the local gin known as *Ogogoro*, palm oil, *garri* processing (a staple food made from cassava), the making of earthenware for cooking and local crockery and raffia work. But the industries which bring in much capital have been taken over by menfolk. Women now assist or act as saleswomen for their male controllers or managers, a situation which brings women back to their economically disadvantaged position.

Perhaps the role women in the area are most known for is that of being traditional birth attendants (TBA) to the surrounding communities. Because primary health care delivery is absent from the community, female TBA and healers make a lot of money from this and many of them thrive on the peoples' ignorance.

Migration

In contemporary times, Ukpiovwin women have been seen as unskilled workers in factories and industries in Aladja and Warri. They also return in time to cook dinner and/or tend to the families' needs and return to these cities early the following day. The size of their families, the implacability of the environment, especially the land and the sea and their husbands' meagre wages have forced these women to be housewives and workers.

Ukpiovwin women do migrate to the urban cities within Delta State, its environs and even to other parts of Nigeria. They move with their husbands when the reason for migration is work in the organised or unorganised sector. Ukpiovwin women have been found among migrant fisher-families along the Niger Delta. Others relocate to the cities and take up blue-collar jobs or engage in trading.

This brings to focus the lack of government presence in Ukpiovwin Community. For several decades, the government has neglected the village and this is being felt now, more than ever. Government presence in Ukpiovwin should be felt especially in the areas of poverty alleviation, health care, education and indigenous mobilisation programmes.

The backbone of the Nigerian economy is petroleum, most of which is exploited from Urhobo land. The Ukpiovwin people are of Urhobo extraction and they need seriously to benefit from the resources their land generates. This is not so. The irony of the Ukpiovwin situation is that Warri, a major town where 'oil money' is enjoyed by workers in the oil sector, is very near Ukpiovwin, yet in terms of electricity, pipe borne water, motorable roads, good schools, Ukpiovwin is another life, a direct opposite of what such satellite towns should be.

The above factors make women ignorant of and even unconcerned about government projects, except during voting exercises. During

Returning from the forest from gathering fuel wood.
Photo: Mabel I. E. Tobrise

these periods, so called illustrious sons of the village return home, mobilise women to vote, but when they win elections they return to the cities.

In recent times, women have faced the tragedy of infant mortality due to disease, neglect, ignorance and malnutrition. This has made the attitude to Family Planning Programmes to be one of general indifference on the part of women who do not see the need to space their children or plan their family. This attitude is due to loss of children in their infancy hence women give birth to more children than they can cater for or cope with. Moreover, the indigenous men have great control over their wives' fertility.

Attendant conflicts to the situations above have led to the collapse of many marriages. In these cases, spouses drift apart to the helplessness of both bride and groom families. Sometimes we have to face the situation of absent fathers, where due to poverty, fathers as household heads drift to the urban areas from Ukpiovwin. At other times, you have some Ukpiovwin women heading families as a result of widowhood, divorces or desertion by the household head. But even when males desert their spouses, the extended family of the wife or the absent father still has a male member who oversees the goings on in such a female-headed home. The village men still have subtle ways of directing the affairs of such homes, while the women oversee the upkeep of the homes and the children. Female-headed households where women exert singular or total authority are thus few and they place a great burden on the matriarch of the household in terms of discipline of the children, care, finances and education. These children may also face the problem of delinquency and deviance.

The changing situation of Ukpiovwin women

The scenario highlighted above shows a bleak future for Ukpiovwin women if the problems of marginalisation which they face do not change.

To cope with these problems, Ukpiovwin women are trying to change their situation for the better and even change their outlooks on life in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

These women have realised that they have an ancestry they cannot change; that they are in joint ownership with the men of a land they have to make habitable and responsive to their needs; they have to make life endurable for future generations; that they have to take the initial steps to improve situations; and become proactive women.

Therefore they now make conscious efforts to turn around their debilitating circumstances. In the last couple of years, Ukpiovwin women have started to organise themselves to address (rather than agitate over) their marginalised situation. Our women have formed alliances with other women providers as wives, mothers, sisters and traders. These alliances work at the village assembly level, where women in their groups as priestesses, healers, traders, etc. identify the problems faced by women and attempt to collaborate materially and through physical efforts to solve them. These alliances resolve inter-women or inter-group conflicts whether or not they involve men. Through these efforts, they are gradually being absorbed into the mainstream of intra-village decision making process.

It is common place to have women, for sake of poverty alleviation, engage in *osusu* or micro-credit schemes at the village level. Ukpiovwin women in the past were individualistic when it came to money matters. However, having seen the gains of osusu as an economic initiative, Ukpiovwin women now engage in it more than they used to do.

In order to enlarge the food base of the village, women farming activities are on the increase. But environmental degradation continues to militate against farming. Nevertheless, these women through their farm networks venture into piggery, the buying and selling of farm produce like yams, beans, palm kernel, cassava, palm oil, etc. to augment any income from the farming of the land. More women now own land and use it for income-generating means like cassava processing, palm oil production and soap making.

With the campaigns for the immunisation of children against childhood killer diseases and exclusive breast feeding of infants, women in the village are gradually getting empowered health wise and the infant mortality rate has fallen. **But** the level of awareness of indigenous women about these programmes still leaves much to be desired from government.

Women non-governmental organisations (NGOs) limit themselves to the major cities of Delta State. We await one that will adopt Ukpiovwin and further the cause of her women. Ukpiovwin women should be helped by these organisations to address their special areas of need. Bifocal development programmes which are put in place *by* the women through community-based organisations and the ones *for* the women should be encouraged by both government and non-government organisations.

Women in the village hardly depend totally on their men financially. The economic recession in the country has led to this. The village market has been expanded to include more stalls. Help is still needed to make this a daily commodity market to minimise the daily trips to Warri and its environs by women traders.

As indigenous women, their lack of functional education still puts them at the mercy of the village leaders who interpret policies from their limited understanding for these women. It is also still common to find women depending on spousal consent before communal or women's groups are joined. Spousal interference in the work of women is still evident, especially in political matters.

Land is vital for survival

Ukpiovwin women are indigenous to the Land. They have lived there since aeons of time and their future should be guaranteed as nurturers of life in all its ramifications. They should no longer be treated with condescension and indifference. Instead a lot should be done to increase their productivity.

The indigenous women of Ukpiovwin need a collective voice to speak against the social, economic, political and cultural deprivations which they face. These women are at the lower rungs of the social ladder due to lack of education, social amenities and the near-to-non-realisation of their civic rights and responsibilities.

We must recognise that land is vital to the survival of any peoples. Whether cultivated or not, the survival of Ukpiovwin women is linked with the Land/earth and its abundant or scarce resources. Ownership, acquisition, transfer of Land should be populist, mass-oriented and not in the hands of a few men, who manipulate Land and its resources for actions detrimental to the good of all in the community. The people should be for the Land and the Land for the people in certain respects.

The Land hardly rejects its people, rather it is people who mostly reject the Land. The Land knows its own, fends for its own with the resources in and on it. Therefore, the quest to save Ukpiovwin land cannot be out of place, wished away or even repressed. The Land should not be used as an organ of repression oroppression. If the Land is free, the people should be free.

Change in Ukpiovwin is still desirable. Men and women resist some of these changes because of the general fear of the unknown. The educated elite of Ukpiovwin are yet to make an impact on the Community. Many of them hardly visit the village except once in a few years. The question is this: If sons and daughters of the soil remain lukewarm to the development needs of their Community, who helps them bring development to the Community?

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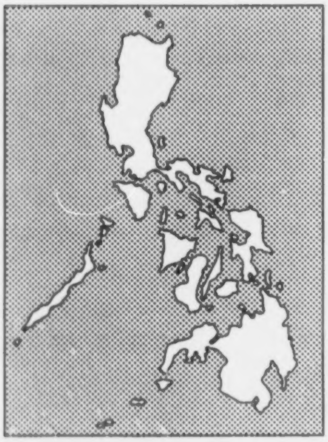
WINES AND SPIRITS: THE ISSUE OF ALCOHOLISM AND THE CORDILLERA WOMEN

by Bernice A. See



Women, being the anchor of families in many societies, have to make their lives easier by taking actions on matters which detract from their productive work and further burdens them. Especially for subsistence producers, this distraction can mean a day's food supply.

Take the issue of alcoholism and gambling. These two vices have been introduced, promoted and institutionalized as a way of life by colonizers in order to break and lull the militancy of indigenous peoples. The cases of the North American Indians, Australian Aborigines and Maoris of Aotearoa have already been well documented.

Affirmative actions have been taken by indigenous peoples themselves to redress these issues. In many cases, the ones who have taken actions have been WOMEN.

Aside from the experiences of the Indians, Aborigines, Maoris and many others, the Cordillera women have a rich experience, including lessons, to share which might give ideas to others on how to start licking these practices which makes us indigenous women suffer more and deliver us further into the control of disempowering forces.

Wine and rituals in the Cordillera

The Cordillera is a region in northern Philippines whose majority population of about a million are indigenous peoples collectively called Igorots, or now, Cordillerans.

Igorots do have wines made from rice or sugar cane. Traditionally these are drunk during festivals and other such occasions. Sometimes, there can be overdrinking which results in rowdiness and even unscheduled boxing events as added attractions of the day, to the delight of boxing aficionados.

Rice wine-making in the Cordillera is a woman's domain, from the yeast-making to storage. Yeast is made from sugar cane and ground rice. Usually there is a woman in the village who specializes in producing this. Some women have preference for a particular kind of cane.

I remember the yeast-maker in our village who used the tender black-skinned variety from our garden for her yeast. She would provide my mother, in turn, with a tablet or two of her excellent yeast. Cane is peeled, cut into fine pieces and then pounded in order to extract the juice. The powdered rice is then mixed with this pulp. The mixture is then formed into tablets about 2 1/2 inches in diameter. Each yeast-maker may have a distinctive size and style of shaping the yeast tablets. The tablets are then dried under the sun after which they are ready for use. Some wine-makers prefer yeast which has been aged for some weeks or months. If stored well, the yeast is still potent even after more than a year. Usually, the tablets are kept above the hearth wrapped in paper inside a woven basket to keep away pests from infesting it.

Women usually prepare wine for festive occasions like the annual wedding festival or for marriage feasts, the village holidays, the town fiesta, etc. Sticky rice is preferred as malt because it holds its consistency. This rice is half-cooked. Some women cook it more until it is almost cooked. It is then ladled out and spread into winnowing baskets for cooling. When it is just lukewarm, it is now ready for yeast application.

While waiting for the rice to cool, the woman usually breaks off some of the yeast tablet and pulverizes it. She then sprinkles this into the lukewarm rice, turning the latter over for even distribution. The mixture is then transferred to a basket or basin lined and covered with banana leaves for fermenting. The container is placed in a warm place, usually the *tapayan* (the area above the hearth where firewood is stored). After about 3-5 days, the wine is 'ripe', ready for storage. This is young wine and the malt and juice are deliciously sweet, even children can partake of this. It is believed that there are women who have the 'hands' to make good yeast as there are those who can make sweet wine.

These wines are stored to age in clay jars, some of them Ming jars. To open the jar for the first time after the storage, this requires the

Cordillera woman. Photo: Nina Ellinger

performance of a simple ritual. Usually a male elder is required to open the jar. He ladles out the first juice to a container and says an offering prayer to the gods, like: '*Naay di mainom ay insaganan nan kinbaey et sapay koma ta idyam ken daida nan gasat ta sumya nan biag da!*'. This prayer is offered while he pours out some wine on the ground or floor. This is an offering to the gods and he asks for prosperity for the household who prepared the wine. This prayer is offered to protect the drinkers from the bad effects of alcohol.

Because drinking is a social activity, this ritual is witnessed by a group who has come around for an occasion. The men in the house cannot just open the jar and drink. It is taboo to be opening the jar for the first time at noon. This should be done either in the morning or afternoon. It is believed that some members of the household will meet an accident if this is not followed.

During weddings, men and women gather on the wedding night to witness the declarations of parents on the inheritance of the newly wed. During this occasion, wine is passed around as often as possible.

in a cup or bowl, without restriction as to gender. One can drink all the content, or just take a sip or simply pass it on.

Wine is supposed to soothe the soul so during wakes, wine is passed around to help ease the grief, to keep the watchers awake, or just to lull their senses so they can stay on through the night. It is at night time, specially after midnight that there is a need for watchers. In the Igorot tradition, the dead have to be watched constantly in order that the spirit of the dead will not be offended and bring sickness or even death to other members of the family. Because of this, it is a community obligation to help in the watch. On cool nights, the rice or cane wine would be of great help.

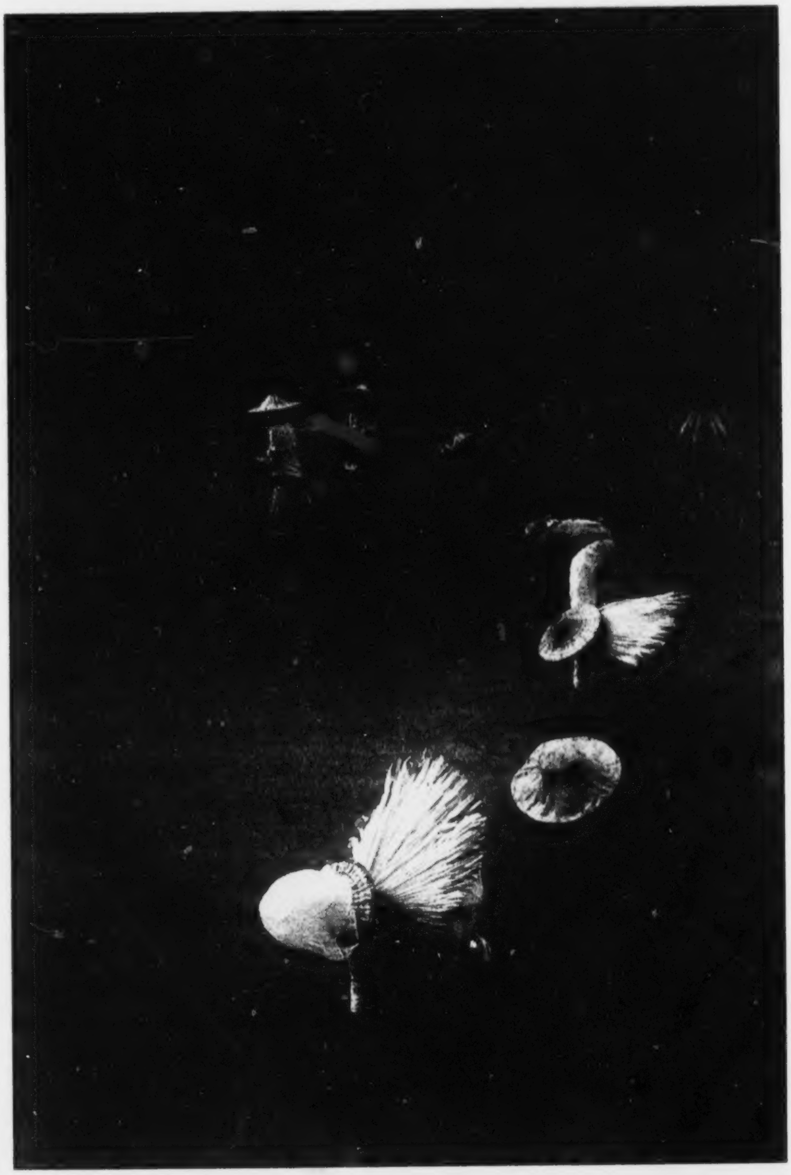
Drinking as a social activity then, afforded a certain degree of control and discipline on the drinkers. That is why the prayers offered at the start of the drinking session are for caution. Wine drinking was done only during special occasions when people come together, like in weddings. This was done in the homes, not in stores or under granaries or vacant houses. Since wine was in the homes, it was not just anybody who could go there and drink the wine. Thus, one would not find men drinking somewhere almost every afternoon.

With the introduction of bottled liquor, so-called 'distilled water', in the Cordillera during the American colonial period, liquor drinking can now be done at anytime and by anybody and even alone. Liquor can be bought on credit, too. Children are asked by their fathers or other relatives to run to the store for liquor.

With the accessibility of liquor to just anybody, this has brought about drunkenness through the years. In the Cordillera, liquor drinking has become endemic among the men. Igorot men, from all walks of life, can be found drinking everywhere especially late in the afternoon. And although not officially recognized as one of the top health problems in the region because there has been no survey on it, it may actually have a significant contribution to the health problem in the region.

Now drinking is an anti-social activity. Drunkenness has become a burden to women and their families. The immediate problem for the community is the violence that can happen when the spirits get the better of the men. And this violence can extend to the family.

The trauma to the children and women brought about by a father/brother/son who comes home incoherent, disoriented, rowdy, hurt and has pissed on his pants has not been studied here in the Cordil-



Kalinga woman planting rice.
Photo: Christian Erni

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lera. Countless cases of physical violence arising from drunkenness are in police blotters all over the region. The observed phenomenon of increasing violence among Cordillera men who are prone to drunkenness may have their roots in the bottled liquor. The women in the communities have traced the occurrences of domestic violence to drunkenness. In almost all cases of domestic violence, the men is under the influence of liquor.

Aside from domestic violence, among peasants and workers, it saps the energy from the men who cannot go out to work the following day. On the other hand, men would claim that the liquor helps ease the effects of fatigue. However, the long-term effect of regular alcohol in the body is not yet well appreciated.

Women's responses

A phenomenon has occurred through the years amongst women to act on this issue. Take the case of the women of Besao.

Besao is a town in one of the six provinces of the region, Mountain Province. It is at the end of an 8-hour ride from the city of Baguio, the regional centre.

Besao is composed of 14 barangays (or neighbourhoods, the smallest political unit). Besao Proper is a cluster of 70 households composed of two barangays with a population of about 2,000.

The barangay is usually composed of several *dap-ays*. Traditionally, the dap-ay is the political unit in the village where decisions are made. There may be several dap-ays in the village but there is a central dap-ay that coordinates village-wide activities like the regulation of the agricultural calendar. Since decision-making is invested in this body (which is composed of men of stature and age), it also looks into peace and order concerns. With the degradation of the indigenous socio-political systems through the introduction of the US inspired government system, the role of the dap-ays has been eroded. Thus, even social problems like drunkenness and gambling are not looked into any more as a regular concern of the dap-ay. This leaves the families, particularly the wives and mothers, to deal with the problems individually.

Like other villages in the region, the women of Besao Proper have their own organization, a church-based women's organization, the Episcopal Church Women (ECW). The problem of drunkenness and gambling became a grave concern for the women in the early 90s. Young men, some of whom were out of school, and/or unemployed were just loitering around. Some fruits or chicken or money started disappearing in homes. And at night, the noise from drunken men disturbed the neighbourhood. These men were not able to help in the fields during daytime. In one of the meetings of the ECW, these problems were brought out. Plans were made, and strategies developed.

First, the women formed themselves into teams. Each team covered a dap-ay or two. The functions of each team were as follows: (1) patrol the assigned area from about 8 - 12 pm; (2) enforce a curfew on everyone; (3) send home everyone who are not in their homes; (4) confiscate liquor and gambling paraphernalia. Secondly, they asked the stores to stop selling liquor.

At about 8 pm when household chores had been done, the women would congregate in an agreed-upon meeting place. They would identify the places where drinking or gambling are most likely to occur. Because this is their village, the women know the nook and crannies where the men usually hide for their anti-social activities. They did this routine for several months every night until the men got tired of their operations.

Some sons got sore with their mothers. It was not unusual to hear snide remarks from the young men when women passed by. When women passed by where the young men were playing basketball, they would have a flying ball coming their way. Even old women who were using canes and nursing mothers had to do their task. In general, the husbands were supportive, especially the older ones.

To make their point clear, the women set up signs in conspicuous places that declared:

SAVE OUR HUSBANDS AND SONS
SUPPORT THE LIQUOR BAN

But despite all these difficulties, including indifference from village officials, the women had good times. It was also time for catching up on news, for exchanging information, and for arranging schedules especially for the labour exchange groups (*ug- ugbo*). It was like in earlier times when women congregated every afternoon at the roadside to chat and exchange stories. The time shared by the women has built their unity. Sometimes their patrol service can last until midnight especially if they have a difficult operation, such as when the men are gambling in a granary somewhere on the edge of the village. For almost a year this went on.

Interestingly, during this same period, many villages in the Cordillera had their own campaigns with the same or additional tactics. In Lubuagan in the nearby province of Kalinga, the women set up road blocks to search for liquor in vehicles entering the communities. In Mabaca in the same province, the women imposed a liquor ban. When the military established their detachment in the village, they were asked to confine their drinking to their barracks. In Aguid in the nearby town of Sagada, the women also imposed a liquor ban, did patrol and lobbied for the adoption of the liquor ban as a village ordinance by the neighbourhood council.

Challenges

The challenge the women are facing now is how to consolidate their gains from these actions and sustain the campaign. Some of the efforts have been dissipated due to several factors. In some of these communities the women found out that it was a thankless task they had to do and it was taking away precious time from other productive endeavours. In most cases, it was the indifference or even conflict with village officials who had been elected to implement the law that demoralized them. In some villages, it was the barangay officials who are selling liquor in their stores arrogantly declaring that this was free enterprise.

Moreover, they also came into conflict with other women, like the storekeepers who almost always were women. In a nearby village, no woman was elected in the recent village elections in May 1997. The women candidates felt that it was their anti-liquor stand that took away their votes. Although drunkenness was raised as an issue during the elections with the candidates promising to impose the liquor ban, interestingly, even the alcoholic candidates were elected.

In Besao Proper, the women also felt that some of their candidates (not necessarily women) lost because of their stand on the liquor ban. They lobbied, though, with the candidates to uphold the good start that had already been generated by their actions. In discussions among themselves, the women said:

> *We must continue and persist in this! In the first place, this was not a program of the village council. It is our program!*

The integration of the villages into the market economy with its promotion of free enterprise has so bedeviled communities that in some villages, even officials would want to cash in on the demand for liquor. If not for the vigilance of the women who rejected the idea of village officials taking turns in selling liquor, this would have been good business for the elected officials in one village. Also, there has been backsliding even among the women themselves. It seems that the economic crisis that is being faced by the communities is such that even those who had been leaders in the anti-liquor ban are themselves now selling liquor. This has disgusted other women so much that they just gave up the struggle. This is the greatest challenge so far for the women.

Impact on the status of women

The role of women as wine-makers is getting lost. The introduction of commercial liquor into the villages erodes further the status of women in the traditional society.

Wine is an important ingredient in the many male-dominated rituals in the village. Before the women had the prestigious role as wine-makers. During the village-wide rituals, especially during the opening of the rice planting season and the closing of the harvest season, one could see the line of women carrying their jars full of wine to the *abong* (traditional male dormitory). With gin available at the store, the women now need not have any role in the rituals except to provide the food. Rice wine does not come with a price on it but with the loving and toiling hands of women who prepared it. A woman was always complimented for the wine she prepared.

With rice wine not necessarily needed in the rituals now, there is a decreasing need for yeast. There are now few women who make yeast in the villages. This means the loss of the skill of yeast-making. This de-skilling is a loss to the community. Cane also is now a disappearing crop. Aside from its use in yeast-making, it was once the source of sugar. The commercial production of sugar is leading to the loss of this crop in the villages. Its only use now is in yeast-making and as a raw sweet.

Drinking is not a social activity any more. Men can just go to the store to buy liquor and to hell with women who will attempt to stop their drinking. The problem is compounded by the fact that most of those who are habitual drinkers are young men. Women are bothered by the effect of this anti-social practice on the young generations.

The diminishing wine-making tradition in villages is also an erosion of the culture, including the discipline that goes with it. One factor that contributed to the deterioration of the discipline of drinking is the erosion of the dap-ay. The dap-ay is the socio-political unit in the village. It maintains 'headquarters' in a physical centre also called the dap-ay or *abong*. This serves as a dormitory for men in the days when houses were still small and adolescents had to sleep somewhere else. The designated place for the men was the dap-ay and for the women the *ebgan*. In the dap-ay, the older men would preside over discussions of matters of whatever nature. As a forum for education and decision-making, this encouraged the involvement of men in matters which affected the community. Cases for resolution were decided here. Sanctions were imposed on those who violated certain village resolutions or ordinances. With the imposition of the state governing system, the dap-ays have now been relegated to being mere social centres in places like Besao Proper. There are some villages though where the indigenous socio-political systems are still functional and can be the real authorities in the village. Without this socio-political authority, the body to impose sanctions and enforce the law is the barangay council.

However, this does not approximate the authority that the traditional system afforded. In many cases, the ones who own the biggest stores are members of the family of elected officials.

When dap-ay authority was strong, the men spent their evenings there to bond and get involved through discussions. This afforded the exchange of ideas among the wise ones and the neophytes. Later, everybody would retire to the confines of the abong to sleep. The sleeping area is just a flooring of wood and each one would just have to find his place among the others. The hearth would have to be kept alive by wood brought in by the young men. With the building of bigger houses (sign of economic prosperity), family members now sleep in their homes. The abongs are now deserted late at night. The old men who dispense wise thoughts are now in their homes too. With the erosion of the dap-ay system, there is no formal support from the village authorities for the women.

Recommendations

But is the situation hopeless? Lessons have to be learned from all these bittersweet experiences. It would be safe to state the following: for campaigns to be sustainable, there must be a strong women's organization with an active membership working closely with its core of leaders in constantly learning how to be creative in their plans. Regular planning and evaluation must be done by the leadership and members, including the conscious development of young leaders, and continuing development education for the members.

Concretely, in order to help the women sustain their campaigns, there is a need to help them sit down and assess their campaign and then plan further. The planning must include the mainstreaming of this campaign in the village or even town program. However, as experience has shown, it is no guarantee that when there is a law (formal or informal) or program, it is going to be implemented. It is imperative then to ensure that a group is tasked to implement this. The women's organization should not be burdened with this although there should be women in the implementing body. The mandate for such a body must come from the village or town council and it must have powers. Part of the mainstreaming would be the integration of the campaign into the indigenous socio-political systems wherever this is functional. Again, the women will have to work at this as there may be some resistance from the men.

On the other hand, there is a need to build a network within contiguous areas in order that the access and availability of liquor is controlled. In the Besao experience, although there was a ban on the selling of liquor in one village, the men would just go to the nearby village or to the town centre to buy gin. This entails networking in order to undertake joint planning and action among women's organizations within the vicinity. At the governmental level, there must be lobby work in the town council. This can be done if there is a strong organization at the village level who can push for its position through the representatives to the town council. This means strengthening the women's organization at the village level.

Not to be forgotten, most importantly, is the need for education. This should be done as organizing goes on. Aside from values formation workshops and the discussion of the health aspect of alcoholism, the problem of alcoholism must be discussed in the context of the whole framework of development that has been foisted on indigenous peoples by colonizers. The free-enterprise spirit must be criticized as the freedom to profit from the miseries of people and to cause conflicts in the community. It must be shown that free-enterprise removes the control of social activities from the hands of communities to the market. Thus, money, from whatever sources, can be used to avail oneself of goods, even if they produce anti-social behaviour.

Alcoholism, or the whole business of liquor, must be seen as an instrument to further lull people from undertaking more affirmative action on their problems. The education aspect must involve the whole community. The men should be sensitized enough to shoulder a significant part of the campaign as this is not a man-against-woman issue. The root of the problems must be traced back to colonization. The introduction of a free-enterprise economy may have brought prosperity to some but at what cost to many.

Another important aspect of the campaign is the renewal of the positive cultural values and practices that fostered unity and solidarity in the community. The traditional role of wine must be emphasized - as part of the festive occasion and not as a scapegoat for whatever problems are bothering individuals. The practice of discourse in the abong must be adapted to present times.

The men must be encouraged to discuss instead of drinking. It is this lack of a forum for free-wheeling discussions that have disappeared with the demise of the dap-ay spirit. Men now do not have a regular forum where they can participate in community matters even without having to be a member of an organization. The dap-ay provided a forum where men could feel they belonged.

Finally, women should not forget to continually learn from others and to be innovative. Since the forces of disempowerment are everywhere, forging ties with the most disadvantaged sectors must be encouraged. Building a strong sustained action needs the effort of many, not only the women, or the indigenous.

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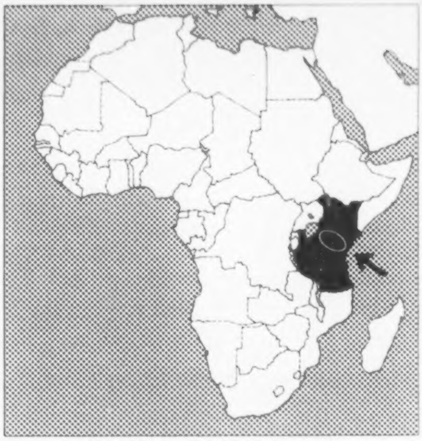
Wildlife Tourism and its Impact on Indigenous Maasai Women in East Africa

by Naomi Kipuri



The Maasai comprise some of the indigenous peoples of East Africa. They live in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania and number approximately one million, but they constitute a minority in both countries. They are pastoralists deriving subsistence mainly from domestic animals. The territory is largely arid and semi arid, but most of the area is also home of numerous wildlife species. The scenic beauty of the area and the large numbers of game have combined to make Maasai land one of the most important tourist destinations in the world. The world famous game parks are have all been carved out of land that was utilised by indigenous peoples, particularly the Maasai.

However, in spite of, and indeed because of the significance of their area for wildlife tourism, the indigenous livestock herding peoples of both Kenya and Tanzania have experienced loss of territory and other productive resources in the creation and maintenance of wildlife tourism. Consequently, the Maasai have become economically, socially and politically marginalised. Although these losses have affected whole populations negatively, they have particularly made women's work difficult as they walk longer distances for water, fuel wood and fodder for sick animals.

Finding themselves economically desperate, women have tried to find ways and means of gaining from the tourist industry. They make cultural objects to sell to tourists along the route. However, their efforts have been hampered by several factors having to do with the socio-economic and political realities of their situation. The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of wildlife tourism and the impact it has had on the livelihoods of indigenous Maasai women.

The first part is a discussion of meanings of concepts as understood in the paper. The second section provides an overview of tourism in Kenya and Tanzania and the place of indigenous peoples in it. Section three is about the experiences of indigenous Maasai women with the tourism industry while the last section draws conclusions, suggestions and highlights some policy implications.

Concepts and terms

Tourism manifests itself in different ways in different parts of the world. In East Africa the main raw materials for tourism are wildlife which are viewed by visitors and the states earn money that way. Wildlife attractions, the natural fauna and flora, which provide habitat for rich and diverse varieties of wildlife are attractive to foreign visitors. There are also the cultural resources which include different peoples, their cultural expressions through art and dance and various artifacts signifying cultural diversity. Whether by accident or default, in East Africa, world famous tourist attractions are areas that were once inhabited (and often managed and maintained thus) by indigenous peoples. Along the coastal zone of East Africa, the beaches, along with sex tourism flourish seasonally.

Indigenous Peoples of East Africa

The concept 'indigenous peoples' as used in this paper is taken from a combination of the concept as understood both by the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations (a subsidiary body of the Commission on Human Rights) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Their definition includes not only natives of an area as opposed to immigrants but also **isolated** and **marginal** populations. This ensures the inclusion of the native peoples of the Americas and Australasia and the peoples of Asia. The definition of the World Bank further emphasizes the non-monetized aspect of indigenous peoples.

The concept of 'indigenous peoples' has been problematic within the African context due to the historical origins of its inhabitants but also a deliberate attempt on the part of state officials to deny the existence of regional social disparities, the displacement and the marginalisation of the minority populations from their territories. The experience of many indigenous populations in Africa is that they are marginalised in political, socio-cultural and economic contexts such that the concept 'indigenous' could easily be understood to mean the isolated, marginalised communities.

In Eastern Africa, groups that have been recognised as indigenous are primarily nomadic pastoralists including the Maasai, Turkana, Samburu, Somali, Borana, Gabra, Rendille, etc. and the hunting gathering communities such as the Dorobo of Kenya and Hadza of Tanzania. In comparison to the more dominant groups, these peoples display differences in culture, language, are isolated from the centres of power and they are marginalised from the mainstream of development. Consequent to these differences, national development plans are developed and implemented without reference to them; without their knowledge and participation and without their consent. For this reason, failures of development initiatives implemented by states for indigenous peoples could be attributed to their lack of involvement in their own development.

Pastoralists are said to constitute 25 per cent of Kenya's population and occupy 80 per cent of the arid region of the country (but being dispersed in a wide arid territory with little or no communication, they are difficult to represent accurately in official statistics). The estimates are the same in Tanzania.

In both Kenya and Tanzania, the marginalisation of indigenous peoples is evidenced by alienation of land for other economic activities; denial of their contribution to the national economy; the looting of their environment and natural resources that are necessary for their survival; the devaluation of their culture, language and knowledge systems; and so on. In reference to tourism, it is evident that wildlife resources are primarily found in areas occupied by indigenous peoples. The largest wildlife park in the world (Serengeti) and the adjacent Ngorongoro were grazing lands that were shared by Tanzania Maasai and wild animals years before they were declared special wildlife areas. Now, few benefits, if any, accrue to them. This is because of the institutional mechanisms that have been put in place to deny them this right.

The significance of wildlife tourism in the economies of East Africa

East Africa is renowned for its abundance of wildlife. Eight per cent (8%) of Kenya is gazetted as wildlife protected areas (National Development Plan, 1997-2001). Since 1987, it has been the principal source of income, contributing 37 per cent of foreign exchange earnings to the national economy, exceeding the revenues from coffee and tea combined. These earnings are expected to increase from Kenyan shillings (KS) 1 790 million in 1997 to KS 2 470 million in 2001. Tourist arrivals are expected to increase from 764,000 in 1997 to 1,160,000 in 2001, representing an annual average growth rate of about 11 per cent. Bed night occupancy will increase at an average annual rate of about six per cent (6%) over the same period according to the Economic Survey of 1997.

Tourism holds a similarly significant place in Tanzania. In 1996/97 alone, Tanzania earned Tanzania shillings (Tshs) 5 billion from safari hunting blocks; another Tshs 33 million were earned from sale of live animals and a further Tshs 19.5 million from sale of game meat (*Daily News* 2 August 1997). In both countries, wildlife and tourism also provide employment to a significant number of people. Others benefit from the industry through hotels, camp sites and safari tour operating firms.

Wildlife conservation dates back to 1884 when the British East African Company's Sporting Licences Regulation laid down some stipulations regarding the number of animals which could be killed in each hunting licence. In 1900, the British administration held a conference in London which set a hierarchy of conservation areas in the following order: National Parks, Game Reserves and Game Controlled Areas. In the case of National Parks, the state controls all the revenue deriving from tourism and hunting while that of Game Reserves is controlled primarily by local authorities. Game Controlled Areas are all the other areas populated by wildlife but that have not (yet) been declared as park or reserve. Wildlife in such areas are assumed to be the property of the state even though the land they live in may be private.

Wildlife tourism and the eviction and marginalisation of indigenous peoples

The establishment of National Parks and Wildlife regimes in Africa is a process that has almost always been characterised by the alienation of land, eviction and restriction of local communities from resources that were critical for their survival (prime grazing; permanent water sources) and the denial of benefits deriving from wildlife. In East Africa, the biggest wildlife park in the world Serengeti (*Siringet*, the expansive plain) was created following the eviction of the Maasai of Tanzania. The same happened with the creation of Tarangire and Ngorongoro (restrictions persist despite the area being declared a multiple use area) also in Tanzania. Across the border into Kenya, on the same ecosystem, Amboseli (*Empusel*, salty ash) and Maasai Mara were carved out of the best grazing areas of indigenous Maasai livestock keepers.

Besides the alienation of land, the utilisation of wildlife resources are also denied local people. All manner of wildlife utilisation either for food or ritual by indigenous people are often declared illegal by the state. Those caught utilising wildlife in any way are punished. Stiff penalties are imposed for killing animals which destroy crops, kill livestock and either maim or kill people. Fuel wood and plant species that have medicinal and other uses for indigenous peoples are also denied.

Official policies and attitudes relating to wildlife management, then, have tended to over-emphasise a law-enforcement approach. This method of conservation has been inherited from the colonial era during which time the rights of people occupying the same territories with wildlife were regarded as secondary to those of wildlife. Accordingly, the training of Park managers followed the same anti-people approach, disregarding development concerns of local people.

In Kenya, until recently, indigenous peoples did not have access to wildlife resources, and received little direct benefit from the wildlife that might occupy their land. As a result, they tended to view wildlife negatively. Even when wildlife utilisation was introduced in Kenya, it was outsiders who were issued with licences to trap, hunt, and breed when culling was required. While these licenses were being issued, indigenous people got arrested and shot for poaching non-endangered species (five Maasai were shot dead by Kenya Wildlife

Service scouts in Maasai Mara in 1993 after having been reported to have eaten giraffe meat). In this way, wildlife authorities made decisions which favoured and benefitted outsiders, with very little benefit accruing to indigenous peoples.

In Tanzania, the creation of Tarangire and Serengeti National Parks involved the alienation of huge tracts of land, again from indigenous Maasai, and set aside for the exclusive use by wildlife. As is the case in neighbouring countries, the benefits generated from such resorts were utilized according to priorities set by the central government. These rarely tallied with those of local communities who bore the brunt of living in the same areas as wildlife.

Like any other big industry, profit is the key motive and in the process nature and people are exploited. Few people in the industry make a lot of money while the majority of the indigenous populations experience displacement as land resources are alienated for wildlife and tourist use.

Restrictions, forced removals and penalties tend to create hostility. Poaching has continued undaunted and biodiversity of wildlife is declining to the extent that some species are endangered. This goes to prove that the policing method of wildlife conservation is untenable and unsustainable.

Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) and other wildlife bodies in the country sought ways of addressing the challenges facing wildlife conservation. Among the measures devised is a change of approach to conservation. A new approach was designed in an attempt to ensure the sustainability of wildlife.

Although some indigenous peoples in the region utilised wildlife for food in times of drought conditions, they did so selectively so that the various species were not exterminated. Other indigenous peoples such as the Maasai, had taboos that proscribed the consumption of game. This taboo, along with other peace rituals helped to protect natural resources and contributed to the conservation of plants and animals, hence the overall preservation of biodiversity.

Unlike many other produces and resources like coffee and tea which benefit those whose areas are suitable for them, East Africa's wildlife tourism does not seem to accrue benefits to indigenous pastoralists who live with the wildlife. On the contrary, areas whose principal resource is wildlife tourism seem to have remained economically marginalised and the people are increasingly poorer. Some of it has to do with the fact that the industry is reliant upon infrastructural facilities such as hotels and campsites and services such as tour vehicles as well as skills to service the industry. However, a great deal has to do with the policies and institutional mechanisms that define relations of production with the industry. The gazetting of an area as a National Park where revenue belongs to the state is a significant policy measure that ensures an effective syphoning of revenue to the national level, hence the marginalisation of such areas and the peoples who live in them.

Within National Parks, lodges and hotels are constructed and tourists pay to stay and view game. They are also entertained with cultural dances and they are offered cultural artifacts for sale at hotel shops. In this way, revenue is generated to the hotel owners who then pay dancers for performing. Hotel shops are hired out to individuals who then pay the hotel a monthly charge.

Since the bulk of the revenue goes to the central government, local indigenous people do not access to income to build the hotels, hence the hotels belong to outsiders, including multi-nationals. The same applies to the running of the art shops in the lodges. Although most of the items sold are manufactured by women, they are bought at a cheap price since the owners have no alternative outlet. Dances are similarly performed by indigenous peoples to entertain tourists, but they are paid minimally.

Wildlife tourism and the marginalisation of women

All that has been discussed in relation to loss of collective resources has affected indigenous Maasai differentially. The experience for women has more serious implications because of their roles as managers of households and domestic resources and the provision of services. Women's work involves fetching water, collecting fuel wood and obtaining and processing food for the households. Women have therefore found themselves with more work following the alienation and enclosure of resources in the creation of National Wildlife Parks. This has further constrained women by taking away their already scarce time.

In addition, it is women who ensure that their households are supplied with food. The traditional food of pastoralists are dairy products, particularly milk. But, following the decrease of grazing areas, the food supplies are consequently becoming inadequate, forcing households to seek for supplementary sources of food. This task has fallen on women since they are the ones who prepare and feed the households. This challenging task of provisioning the households has not been matched by alternative sources of income with which to meet these ends. Therefore, women have been involving themselves with numerous income generating activities as a way of coping with the new demands. The tourism industry presents itself as seeming lucrative enough for women to generate the much needed revenue.

Hotel and lodges provide an avenue through which to tap revenue from the tourist industry. Along the tourist circuit, curio and art shops are built. Most of the items are made by women, bought at a low price and sold to tourists at a much higher price. Licences to operate such businesses are issued by the local county council, often through bribery. Since local people, particularly women who are the artists, do not bribe (are not aware of it), they do not get to sell in shops. Instead, they display their wares along the side-walk or wait for tour buses and walk with them and urge individual tourists to buy from them.

The border town on Namanga between Kenya and Tanzania, is one of the most important stops along the route. Namanga more than demonstrates the plight of women within the tourist industry. Women try to take advantage of the industry by selling art work to tourists travelling between Kenya and Tanzania, but, selling items directly to tourists puts women in direct competition with the traders with shops that sell similar items. To reduce (eliminate) competition from women, the traders work in association with tour operators of both Kenya and Tanzania to bring tourists specifically to the traders for a fee. They are also used to spread propaganda against the women. They are told to inform tourists not to buy from the women because their items are very expensive, dirty and of poor quality. They are also warned not to exchange currency with the women because they will be given fake money.

Since tourists are very gullible, not knowing any better, they truly believe what they are told. In the process, few women manage to sell any of their items and they make little money, if at all, after spending perhaps the whole day trying to sell their items. In this way, they fail to benefit from the tourist industry.

However, outsiders with better marketing skills, and selling items made by the same women, are able to sell where women have failed. This is partly because they speak foreign languages that women do not understand, although they speak few words of each of the major European languages. Outsiders also have organised their shops to cater for all the needs of tourists - beadwork, carvings, cloth, etc. - while women might only have their own art work to offer.

Furthermore, women generally lack an organised trade infrastructure such as shops at which to display their art. They are also unaware that they have to bribe first to get allocated plots on which to build shops, and also that they need to work in association with tour operators to bring them tourists. They also lack entrepreneurial skills including foreign languages to enable them to communicate with the tourists. They also face stiff competition from traders who in addition to selling the women's items at exorbitant prices, do not wish to see them sell the same items to tourists at lower prices. These constraints have denied indigenous Maasai women a chance of gaining from the tourist industry in their own area.

Where organised cultural villages exist and drivers are obliged to take tourists to them for cultural shows and shopping, more tricks are also played. Tour drivers and guides are usually the ones who receive the money which they are then supposed to pay the villagers. In one of the cultural villages of Ngorongoro, in Tanzania, one driver indicated that although each tourist is supposed to pay $50 for the visit to the village, they pay the women $2 and pocket the rest. They do this because, according to him, 'the Maasai do not know the value of money'. This means that even if women had shops, the tourists would not go to them; and they continue being exploited even where legislation tries to reduce the incidence of exploitation.

The current situation

Following numerous complaints about the imbalances of wildlife tourism, some changes have in recent years begun to take place. In Kenya, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) embarked upon an Elephant Conservation and Community Wildlife Programme that aims at ensuring the long term survival of elephants, and reduce the hostility towards wildlife on the part of indigenous peoples living in areas adjacent to National Parks.

In the process, the Park Management has devised what they perceive as a more sustainable approach that would involve the participation of communities neighbouring parks in wildlife management and conservation. This marks a shift in the approach from one of policing the parks to involving local communities as custodians of biodiversity. This has involved the incorporation of communities neighbouring parks in the planning, management, conservation and utilisation of wildlife resources and benefiting from revenues generated from wildlife conservation. The degree of incorporation of local communities in the preservation of wildlife biodiversity, however, has varied from one country to another in the region.

Kenya has recently tried to reorganise its Wildlife Service, with wildlife extension service designed to promote good relationship with the communities and involving these communities in conserving wildlife resources. Kenyan initiatives involved raising levels of tolerance and attitudes of rural communities that bear the brunt of living with animals; sharing revenues with communities whose resources are shared with wildlife. It has also created a fund to support rural community development initiatives. In some areas, a portion of park entry fees is given to communities in the recent 'Partners' programme. The equivalent programme in neighbouring Tanzania is known as Community Conservation Service (CCS) and its primary objective is to establish good neighbourliness or *ujirani mwema* with indigenous peoples who live with wildlife.

However, the above changes were necessitated, not by a sudden willingness on the part of officials to share revenue with indigenous peoples, but by the reality that unless something is done, wildlife is soon going to disappear. The initiatives are still to be internalised by the officials of wildlife management. These new concepts are expected to bring about change in attitudes between wildlife authorities toward local communities and vice versa. Since these are still newly adapted strategies, they are either unknown or not fully internalised by most park staff. Park rangers still use forms of harassment that are not always legal. Because of this, Parks are still perceived with negativity by indigenous peoples adjacent to them.

Besides the Park rangers, there are also contradictions with wildlife management policies that are bound to undermine long term relations with the new approach. While sport hunting by foreigners is practised in large blocks in Tanzania, subsistence hunting is proscribed and arrests are common during times of food shortages. While wildlife freely graze and browse in village lands, livestock are proscribed in the Parks, and so on.

How women currently cope

While some women have had to stop trying to market items altogether following stiff competition, others have tried to seek solutions that would improve their situation. They have had to organise themselves into groups of ten or twenty and are able to then buy or build premises to market their items. They also borrow money from small enterprises or do collections from well-wishers. With the money they buy beads and make artistic items designed according to the colours and patterns that tourists prefer.

Time is a factor for most women because of the many chores that women have to perform in the home. To get around their common problem, women take turns or sell for each other and this releases them to attend to other duties while their items are being sold by others. To succeed in doing this, women have developed a very high degree of honesty and care and concern for each other's welfare. While some problems still persist, the stiff competition that exists with the outside groups, as well as the tricks that drivers and tour operators play, are unknown among women.

This has, however, been possible only in areas where the land still belongs to the community and where the local council does not play a role in the allocation of land. It is also where outsiders have been denied access to construct shops at strategic locations in order to reduce competition.

The way forward

For wildlife tourism to be achieved in a sustainable way, the following needs to be considered:

- Integrating development in rural communities with wildlife conservation, such that community survival goes hand in hand with wildlife management;
- Educating and demonstrating to villagers about the potential value of wildlife resources, given the new opportunities;
- Permitting a certain amount of consumptive use of wildlife, and sustainable use of other needed resources in the park;
- Ensuring that development initiatives are gender specific to avoid any unplanned consequences;

- Coordinating marketing of tourist infrastructure and artifacts in order to reduce competition and allow indigenous peoples, particularly women, a chance to gain from tourism.

The way forward suggests a need for change in policy in order to allow indigenous peoples to benefit from resources that they have helped to conserve. This would not be the first time that such a direction has been taken in the region.

In Zimbabwe, for instance, the Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975 marked a change in government policy toward ownership of wildlife resources. Zimbabwe's wildlife conservation regime officially recognised that wildlife was the property of those who lived on the land with it. Since that time, rural communities have had direct access to wildlife resources, and wildlife utilisation is an integral part of the country's land use strategies. Barriers are used to facilitate this concept rather than exclude wild animals from human settlement areas. East Africa can do it too.

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CONFRONTING THE 'NEW WORLD ORDER'

Article 6 of the Beijing Declaration

> *The 'New World Order' which is engineered by those who have abused and raped Mother Earth, colonised, marginalised, and discriminated against us, is being imposed on us viciously. This is recolonisation coming under the name of globalisation and trade liberalisation. The forces behind this are the rich industrialised nation-states, their transnational corporations, financial institutions which they control like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). They will cooperate and compete among themselves to the last frontiers of the world's natural resources located in our lands and waters.*

THE NEW WORLD ORDER AND INDIGENOUS WOMEN: THE CASE OF THE OKANAGAN PEOPLE, CANADA

by Jeanette Armstrong

I am of the Okanagan People, one of the Plateau Tribes of the Great Interior Plateau of western North America. Historically, they occupied a traditional territory stretching from the north end of the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia, Canada, south to the confluence of the Okanagan River with the Columbia River in Wash-

ington State in the United States. The Selkirk Mountain Range forms the eastern boundary and the Cascade Mountains form a shared use area with other Plateau Tribes who were our friends and allies: the Nlakapmex, Lillooet and Shuswap peoples[1].

This region of the great North Western Interior Plateau sustains an extremely fragile ecosystem. Climate and altitude create a mix of dry sparse alpine and semi-arid sub-alpine grassland surrounding the arid drainage of small streams into lakes and narrow river valleys. The Plateau peoples travel extensively through these systems harvesting foods at various levels and at different times of the year. The seasonal growth cycles of all species is carefully studied and understood as everyday information. Customs and traditions centre around such knowledge.

The complexity of living ecologically

The cultures of the various Plateau tribes reflect the complexity of living ecologically sound principles of coexistence in all aspects of their lives. It is evident in the peaceful systems of governance common to all Plateau tribes. The governance systems, fundamentally based on regional and village autonomies, coexisted within an intricate system of shared resources and territories, within larger units bordered by common language and cultural practice. The practice of sharing resources in joint use areas was and is extended between many tribes and traditionally was maintained through mutually beneficial protocols for abundant food sources, such as salmon, large game and some berry and root crops.

The traditional Okanagan families from each of our seven reservations still use this territory for harvesting all their traditional foods and medicines yearly. Gathering of root and berry crops is still practised among all tribes, however game and fishing harvests have seriously diminished as a result of encroachments. The traditional families work extremely hard to maintain traditional gathering practices because it is so central to our cultural survival.

The Okanagan people are listed as an endangered group in Canada. Our numbers have been reduced to around 2,000 persons. There are several thousand Okanagans among four other cultural groups in Washington State in the USA on the Colville Confederated Indian Reservation. Cultural survival is a critical issue. Of the approximately 2,000 surviving Okanagans in Canada, the Penticton Indian Reservation where I am from has about 700.

Before contact with Europeans, the Okanagans practised a unique egalitarian social structure which formed the basis of their philosophy and provided a foundation of full sustainability. Historically, the Okanagans were participants in a society shaped through the way in which they coexisted with the environment of the Plateau. They lived in and cared for their lands as large permanent gardens as a result of the severe scarcities imposed by the environment. Their highly developed knowledge of earth sciences, in the practice of natural permaculture, is the unique aspect which sets them apart from the nomadism and the agricultural based economies of other indigenous peoples of North America. The Okanagan practice of religion is tied directly to the gathering of foods and medicines of the land and therefore is uniquely integral to long-term sustainability. We know that if each new generation of Okanagans has the opportunity to live and practise their culture in the same way, then they and the land will remain healthy.

Their generational practice of a non-violent philosophy is most apparent in religious practices which underlie the laws governing interaction with other species on the land. Religious practices in all Plateau tribes centre around a sophisticated pattern of observances and celebration of the natural order. Village wide and regional first food feasts and ceremonials are common to all Plateau peoples. Individualised observances to all life forms and seasonal occurrences in the natural order are incorporated into everyday lifestyle and economic strategy in an overall social order implemented by the individual, the family and the community. Love for all life and compassion for the needs of all living beings are an inherent precept in a social process where the interdependence of life forms is so fragile. The Plateau peoples are recognized for the deep ecological principles inherent in their philosophical worldview carried in the deeply religious belief system evident in their everyday lives.

The women of the Plateau: keepers and teachers of knowledge

The principle of a true egalitarianism resonates in their societally cooperative customs and familial constructs. Ethnographers who have documented various Plateau customs have commented widely on various outstanding aspects of social order which are unique to the Plateau peoples. While there were and are recognised leaders of both men and women there seems to have been no noticeable class distinctions being that leadership roles are mostly roles as 'speakers' and 'carriers' of the responsibility to be 'reminders' to the community; reminders about things which each willingly knew to carry out without enforcement, because doing it was gratifying, in a practical sense as well as economically and spiritually.

Division of labour related to the social order in an intricate system of social and family responsibilities while observing and honouring the physical challenges inherent in age, sex and individual talents and at the same time encouraging choice and challenge to individual limitations. Of particular significance was the way Plateau social customs esteemed women in all roles.

Women were natural leaders in conservation practice carried in the customs and rituals observed in the gathering of plant species. Headwomen were appointed and highly respected in their knowledge of permaculturing to preserve and conserve the harvest crops. Their extensive knowledge of climatic, seasonal and geographical factors was a necessity in the regulation of gathering foods and related to the areas and quantities of root and berry crops to be gathered by whole villages. They regulated even to the exact numbers of roots to be dug in given areas in given seasons. Women are still considered the most knowledgeable herbalists and healers in all Plateau tribes. Elder women as spiritual leaders are sought by both men and women for healing and counselling because of the great wealth of societal, spiritual and ecological knowledge they possess. Women chiefs and leaders are common to the interior Plateau, in the present and traditional cultures.

The women of the Plateau tribes are instrumental in maintaining sustainability. They are the principal keepers of such knowledge and are teachers to the young as all women the world over are. The natural liberation of women is customary to the Okanagan people and is a traditional practice as well as maintained by contemporary culture. We see it as a necessary principle in the practice of deep ecology.

Endangered environment, endangered peoples

Traditional Okanagan people are currently under serious threat of extinction and continuously seek ways to live within the principles of their philosophy as well as to sustain themselves economically. A critical factor in achieving this will be in the cultural conservation of the traditional Okanagan practice. Only one course may be pursued by the traditional Okanagan people, and that is to restore and maintain culturally appropriate practices which contribute to sustaining their culture and to sustaining the biodiversity of their lands.

Much of the encroachments by Canadian settlers was formerly in the river basin floor but more recently is now moving into the fragile alpine and subalpine zones which form the headwaters and watershed retention areas for all of the valleys. In the Penticton area lies one of the most sacred mountains to the Okanagans. It is currently under livestock grazing permit and recreation development as a world class ski resort, which has created a huge real estate and service system near to the recreation park. This is extremely fragile tundra alpine zone and is the headwaters for creeks in the drainage system to four of our communities. The creeks which drain off the mountains of this area flow into the lakes and river systems of the Similkameen River and the Okanagan River. They are extremely important and sensitive areas requiring good conservation and some restoration. Cattle overgrazing and logging is already of great concern to environmentalists and to the Okanagan Nation's traditional land users. Any new development will cause disaster.

The political situation we find ourselves in is that the Okanagan Nation currently holds only aboriginal rights to lands in these areas. This means that we retain rights to harvest and practise cultural activity on all of these lands in 'cooperation' with other non-aboriginal title and licence holders. Even as the Okanagan traditional families continue to traditionally harvest foods and medicines in this area, there is increasing difficulty of practising this in a sustainable way while protecting the land, plants and wildlife. Our political difficulty comes with the provincial government policy of giving priority to the licensed fee simple title-holder to practise ranching, logging, mining or recreational developments, thereby diminishing, limiting and usually terminating our aboriginal land use rights, because the natural biodiversity has been displaced by these means. As this happens, species become endangered and face extinction. We are left with an aboriginal right that cannot be practised because there is nothing left to practise it on.

As Okanagan traditional land users we have observed such practices cumulatively destroy the watershed, disturb and deplete the natural biodiversity in this sensitive dry belt over a very short period, causing irreparable damage. This land is described by environmentalists as containing some of the most unique flora and fauna in Canada because it occurs within a semi-desert climate which is actually the northern tip of the Sonoran Desert. From lowland grass steppe through dry rolling fir alpine grassland to the high plateaux and steep rugged mountain subalpine fir zone, there is an extremely sensitive biosystem which is slow growing because of the low 7-14 inches of yearly rainfall. Ground cover vegetation including moss, lichens and dryland grasses, sage and cactus and antelope bush which protects the water table on the grasslands takes over twenty-five years to regenerate once damage or disturbance occurs. All life forms depend on the small wetlands and streams which are sustained through the cover provided by the sparsely forested slopes in which stands of old growth pine and fir hold the thin soils from snow melt and wind erosion. The subalpine and tundra alpine zone at the higher altitudes of the seven major peaks are the most fragile of plant species used for medicines. In these forests and grasslands and tiny wetlands are found a wide variety of plants, birds and animals. Many of these are on the rare and endangered and vulnerable lists of conservationists. Some species are extinct outside our minuscule reservation lands and will only have protection as long as these lands remain undeveloped.

For the Okanagan traditional families, we have become alarmed at the near disappearance of some plants which provide medicines and food upon which we are dependant and which provide sustenance and health to many Okanagan people of this community as well as other Okanagan and Interior Salish Plateau Peoples. We are extremely concerned over the disappearance of some important animals and birds of the area that are being displaced by cattle grazing, agriculture, clearcutting and water diversion and now recreation developments. Increasingly, the attitude of the government is that our aboriginal rights are an obstacle disturbing ‘business’ and investment.

The government continues to sell off the rights of all people who live in this area, in favour of the private corporate interests of the wealthy in other countries like the USA; corporate rights which are better protected under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and now in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) than those of the people who live in Canada and whose families will be living here for generations to come.

As Okanagan traditional people we will not abandon our children's rights to clean water and a healthy wilderness with all the life forms on it. We are opposed to increased pollution, contamination, increased disturbance of the land surface for mega extractions of resources and the depopulating and displacement of the wildlife species in all areas where modern development is mindless of sustainable practice. We stand and speak for all those unborn who will live there, native and non-native, and those who do not have human voice to speak with for their rights.

The 'New World Order' and indigenous peoples

It has been my observation that inherent in the apparatus to 'globalise the economy' are economic truths which rely on power wielding, wealthy countries thrusting 'development' investments unto indigenous peoples under the guise of 'assistance'. Investments sometimes in the form of 'aid' are used to extract 'cheap' resources and take advantage of lower costs resulting from a disregard for labour and human rights and poor environmental protection, in order to provide 'low cost' goods for 'competitive trade'. It has been my observance that this is happening worldwide to indigenous peoples who are still practising sustainable land based cultures.

It is not coincidental that indigenous peoples are found in the lowest income sectors of all such colonised countries, living in the poorest of conditions and suffering the lowest life expectancies. In 'developing countries' these destitute people are the fodder fuelling the corporate labour machine to grow, extract, produce and manufacture goods from the resources of lands seized and held through military aggressions against the same peoples. While in 'developed' countries like Canada, indigenous peoples are living in the most extreme bracket of poverty and are suffering all the symptoms of third world inhabitants' diseases and social ills. Much of this kind of systemic human violence is resulting in genocide as indigenous populations are forced into extinction. It is not coincidental that the human rights as well as the political and social rights of colonised indigenous peoples are coldly ignored in world trade agreements and international fora by the powers heading world economic organisations.

Beyond that, there is now emerging a deeper implication for everyone in the dangerous new forms of human rights violation toward endangered indigenous peoples. Imbedded in the motivation for global economic restructuring of trade 'regulations' is the growing 'trade' in the new technologies. Biogenetically engineered products for agricultural, pharmaceutical, medical and other commercial applications are the New World Order's 'gold mines' and are the newest political reasons for gaining access to lands and natural resources. Access is accomplished through large international agreements and covenants which facilitate and protect the trade of information, data and research; economic and political protocols and regulations which are devoid of compassion and blind to the massive human suffering created under the banner of 'development'. The orchestrated relationship between global organisations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation are regulations which assure access. Even though there is hope in the UN Convention on Biodiversity and some articles such as Article 8j in its draft declaration, which recognises the need to protect indigenous peoples' knowledge systems, there is a resistance by countries like the USA to agree to it. Clearly this article and several others create a legal obstacle to easy 'legislative' access and are directly in legal opposition to certain sections regarding access in agreements such as the GATT/TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and proposed expansions of it.

The end result of mono-cropping of hybridised patented seeds and animals by multinational corporations is to systematically replace indigenous and local economies and products. In that process the degradation of lands and the stripping of life forms not only diminish biodiversity by killing indigenous plants and animals but result in the killing off of indigenous populations in the same way without their lives or their rights being seen as critical to the health of those lands.

It is indigenous peoples practising sustainable economies who stand in the way of the New World Order protecting their lifestyles, their lands and their survival with their lives, continuously suffering serious human rights violations because they remain without recognized political, social and economic rights as 'peoples'. Indigenous peoples are defined as 'populations' of 'nation states' rather than 'peoples or nations' in order to maintain the total political will and economic control over them and their land resources. New legislations meeting corporate interests move communally held lands into privately held titles enabling the legal displacement of peoples from their lands through the pressure of large 'privatisation' interests versus small local owners who are illiterate and without capital to compete. The pseudo-democracies of most developing countries ignore social policy to improve the living conditions of indigenous peoples, insuring continued subjugation.

In addition, another major concern is the 'patenting' of life forms for drugs and valuable products through 'discoveries' appropriated from indigenous scientific knowledge for corporate commercial gain. The result has been the creation of 'protection legislation' by governments, creating federal 'ecological reserves, bio-regions and resource co-management areas', requiring more land seizures from indigenous peoples and their displacement and genocide. At the international level, germplasm, gene-banking and patenting as owned 'intellectual' property rights facilitate trade in life forms. This kind of commodification circumvents and subverts communally held knowledge by indigenous peoples without regard to their 'intellectual' rights as distinct groups and without regard to possible violations to their human rights in the trade and patenting of human biological materials.

Harvesting body parts

There is a new market and trade in body parts for organ and tissue transplants into the bodies of the wealthy. Body parts are often purchased from countries with poor regulations on how donor parts are acquired from the desperate and the poor. Indigenous bodies for the 'harvest' of body parts are a resource in these countries. There is a documented rise in the sales of organs by the living in exchange for basic survival necessities in some of these countries, motivated by the demand created by the wealthy and resulting in the subsequent facilitation of 'free trade' by negligent domestic policies.

Even more serious invasions and violations can be seen as an example in a project of an international consortium of scientists, governments and corporate interests in North America and Europe which was launched in 1992. The project is mandated to take blood, tissue and hair samples from 'endangered' indigenous communities around the world. Research teams are being funded to go into indigenous communities around the world to collect samples of at least twenty five persons from each identified group. The blood samples are to be 'immortalised' using a cell preservation method to keep specific cells of an organism alive and capable of replication. In this way unlimited amounts of the DNA of donor organisms could be reproduced for future study. Immortalised cell lines are to be stored in the United States in Camden, New Jersey. The Human Genome Diversity Project was adopted by the Human Genome Organisation (HUGO) in January 1994. HUGO, begun in 1988 by scientists, is mandated to map the entire genetic structure of the human species. It seeks to sequence the DNA information in all 100,000 genes in the human body. While HUGO intends to uncover the norm of the human genome as a composite mode, the Human Genome Diversity Projet (HGDP) seeks to map and sequence genetic diversity. It seeks specific divergences from the human monotype identified by the HUGO project.

Principles of the HGDP stated that the urgency in collecting DNA samples from indigenous peoples was to 'avoid the irreversible loss of precious genetic information' through the danger of physical extinctions of peoples. The HGD Project, refers to indigenous peoples as 'isolates of historic interest (IHIs)' and covets the DNA of disappearing indigenous peoples for study.

Using anthropologists and linguists, the project has identified 722 such populations of indigenous peoples. The following list gives a breakdown of the indigenous communities targeted for DNA collection by geographic area:

Africa	165
Asia	212
South America	114
Oceania	101
North America	107
Europe	23
TOTAL	722

Project leaders say the research may benefit donor populations in that it could lead to improved information about their health problems and provide medical care for easily treated problems.

Anthropologists, linguists, health service workers and other individuals trusted by the target groups are being recruited, using the groups' historical and medical data to provide entry into their communities. However, the project is not mandated for anything but collection and data basing of human DNA.

The HGDP received considerable public criticism for racism in characterising the cultural genocide of indigenous peoples as a scientific phenomenon to be studied and a criterion by which groups were designated to the list for genetic sample collection. As recently as this summer the UN Subcommission on Human Rights passed specific wording in their resolution on Indigenous Peoples and the Decade on the issue of the DNA collections from indigenous peoples and protection of their human rights.

HUGO has been separately challenged in whether DNA sequence information of the human genome should be freely accessible in international data banks in reaction to applications for hundreds of patents for DNA sequences by the National Institute of Health in the USA and the disclosure that Britain's Medical Research Council had drawn up plans to charge commercial user fees for access to the data.

Planned intervention is needed

It has been my observation that it is the speculative nature of such research wherein lies the potential of discoveries to feed lucrative transnational markets in developed countries with products made possible through the manipulation of DNA into novel medical, cosmetic or other commercial use. Transnational trading of human cell lines becomes possible through the vulnerability of DNA sequence to be classified as 'data' and human cells to be classified as 'micro organisms' rather than the sacred core of human life.

This world shift toward 'a new order' of governance devoid of compassion and care for human rights and dignity must be seen as the first stage of a future that awaits all. It is imperative at this time that organisations seeking to assist indigenous peoples be aware of some of these realities and their complexity in their support at international forums. It is also important that indigenous peoples who are practising sustainable lifestyles be assisted and protected to continue to thrive and that the work to accomplish this at the international level continues even more strongly. It is vitally important that there be drawn a clear difference from those indigenous groups who have joined the progression towards destructive practice. Assistance should ideally be directed toward the recovery of their own sustainable practice rather than 'aid' to abandon it.

For the Okanagan people, there are few economic opportunities outside of labour or professional service for those practising traditional Okanagan culture. For those who are not practising traditional Okanagan culture, there is an alarming capitalist move toward agreement with the government's current 'treaty' negotiations to extinguish aboriginal rights in return for 'greater' economic development 'flexibility'. If 'modern' treaties such as the one Canada has offered result in economic developments which further degrade our environment, our numbers and our reserved land bases which are already so small, there is hardly a chance of our culture's, and therefore of our land's healthy continuance. Unless there is a planned intervention toward cultural sustainability, leading to long-term recovery this political move aggressively and unquestionably predicts our extinction and genocide.

The traditional families have been maintaining culturally appropriate lifestyles by small organic farming and ranching while supplementing their diet requirements with wild harvesting of deer, elk, moose, berries and root crops from lands outside of the reservation. We believe that a spiritual connection to the animals and plants is a necessary part of everyday life for true sustainability and that our gathering practice is part of that spiritual acknowledgement. We know that when our land is depopulated of those plants and animals then there will be no more Okanagans.

Note

[1] The article is based on a paper presented at a seminar on *Natural Resources Management Amongst Indigenous Peoples - seen in a Gender Perspective* organised by The International Committee of the Danish Women's Society in Ålborg, Denmark, on 4 October 1997.

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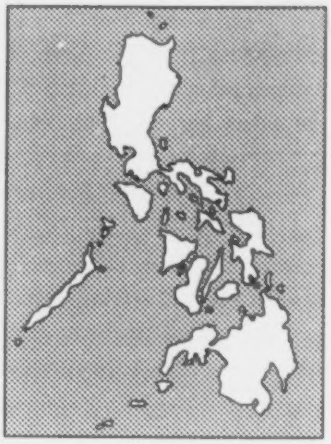
GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPACTS ON INDIGENOUS WOMEN: THE PHILIPPINE CASE

by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz



The new wave of globalization which is aggressively invading even the most remote villages in the world is having disastrous impacts on indigenous peoples. Globalization as we are witnessing today is the continuation of colonization with the use of more sophisticated methods. In the early days of colonization the gunboat and the superior military technology of the colonizers were the main weapons used. Now, the international financing institutes like the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and multilateral trading bodies like the World Trade Organization (WTO), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), etc. are the main instruments used.

There are those who say that globalization is positive because there is more access to information and indigenous peoples can communicate faster with each other. What is happening even in the most remote villages of indigenous peoples can be known worldwide because of internet. Others claim that for women globalization is also good because jobs are created in the industrial enclaves and women do get hired. Industries like garments and electronics employ more women than men. Some say that since globalization is inevitable there is no point in fighting it. We should just focus on building safety nets to absorb its negative impacts.

The main objective of globalization is the removal of national barriers to trade and investments. This will allow foreign corporations and investors to enter freely and establish wherever they want, bring in capital goods without being taxed, freely trade their products, and bring out their profits with no restrictions. National laws should be harmonized to adhere to WTO standards and to IMF-WB prescriptions. Foreign companies and foreign investors will be given the same treatment as the nationals of the country they are entering.

For debt-ridden countries which are under the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) of the World Bank and the IMF the basic prescriptions of liberalization, deregulation, and privatization are not new. What is new is the more aggressive push to implement these further and the broadening of areas covered. Apart from the trade in manufactured goods, the sectors which are being liberalized and deregulated now include services, agriculture, intellectual property rights, investments, and even government procurement.

Another difference is the legally-binding nature of the WTO agreements. If you are a signatory and you are not implementing the agreements and commitments you made, you can be sued at the WTO dispute settlement body. If it is proven that you are guilty, cross-retaliation[1] can be employed against you.

The parties involved in all these transactions are nation-states. Indigenous nations and peoples never got consulted when the governments of the countries they belong to signed on to the Final Draft of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which is now referred to as the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements.

This article will look into the face of globalization in the Philippines and show the actual and potential impacts on indigenous women. Occasionally I will cite some examples from other countries.

The gap between rhetoric and reality

The form of globalization confronting us today is recolonization done in a more subtle but comprehensive manner. Therefore, the impacts are extensions of what took place during colonization. After colonization the exploitation of ancestral lands and resources did not stop. The local elites, who are usually from dominant population and which the colonizers cultivated, became the exploiters. The government was made a vehicle by these elites, in complicity with foreign business interests, to violate indigenous peoples' rights. Laws were passed to legitimize the appropriation of lands and resources. This is why to many indigenous peoples in the world the government and corporations are two sides of the same coin.

Since the late 1960s up to the present, indigenous peoples' movements built up and became visible not only in the national arena but also within the United Nations. The most blatant violations committed against indigenous peoples were documented and brought to the world's attention. The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was finalized in 1993. Subsequently, the International Decade for the World's Indigenous Peoples was declared.

With these developments, it became fashionable for governments to claim that they are taking care of their indigenous peoples. The number of governments who now have national legislations on indigenous peoples' rights has increased. However, there is a big gap between rhetoric and reality. With globalization, even these few existing legislations are endangered. They are effectively rendered toothless and meaningless by laws or policies favoring liberalization.

The Philippine example

The Philippine situation is a classic example. Due to the organized lobby of indigenous peoples, the 1987 Philippine Constitution finally included three sections under two articles which recognize the rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral domain, self-governance and cultural integrity. However, it took ten years before the government passed an enabling act to operationalize the constitutional provision. This is the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) which was passed a few days before 1997 ended.

Within these ten years, however, the 12 million hectares which was the approximate area considered to be ancestral domain has been reduced to 3 million (Guzman *et al.* 1997). Most of the lands are taken over by government or leased by government to private corporations.

Even before this act was passed many laws which make a mockery of it have already been enacted. The Philippine Mining Act (Republic Act 7942) which passed like a breeze in 1995 is just one example. This Mining Act allows for mining corporations with 100 per cent foreign equity to have a lease on mineral lands up to an area of 81,000

Woman from the Buhid people of Mindoro, Philippines, on her way to plant taro seedlings in her swidden. Photo: Christian Erni

hectares for as long as fifty years. These companies can repatriate fully their profits and are given tax-holidays for a period of 10 years.

Aside from the Mining Act there are other laws which were passed, amended, or repealed to concur with the commitments of the government to the WTO. Some of these laws will be cited in the subsequent sections.

The Philippine Mining Act of 1995, however, remains the biggest threat to the eventual dislocation of indigenous peoples from their ancestral territories. Even with the passage of IPRA indigenous peoples do not have a reason to be complacent that their ancestral land rights are secured. IPRA clearly exempts mineral lands from the coverage of certificate of ancestral domain titles (CADT). At best these lands will be reclassified. However, the process of reclassification is extremely complicated.

What is being offered by the Mining Act and the IPRA is the prior informed consent of the indigenous peoples who will be directly affected. However, it still remains to be seen how this process is going to be undertaken.

The Mexican situation

Other countries have similar stories. Article 27 of the 1917 Mexican Constitution which created the *Ejido*, the community-based system of land tenure in which the government protected privately held parcels and communal lands within the community from the market, was amended to allow these lands to become alienable and disposable. Aside from allowing outsiders to buy the lands, the revision also allows for the seizure of these ejidos if the owners fall into debt (Miller 1997).

This was done by the Mexican government under Carlos Salinas to comply with the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which considers such constitutional provisions as barriers to free trade. The rights of foreign corporations to invest and exploit indigenous peoples' lands and resources are given precedence by multilateral and regional trade agreements. This development spurred the uprising of the Zapatistas last January 1, 1994 in Chiapas, Mexico.

Mexico is one of the few countries which have signed and ratified ILO Convention 169 (Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries). However, the government wants to become a major player in the global market economy. The government's adherence to trade agreements like NAFTA, WTO, and the IMF-WB programs leads to the blatant violation of whatever instruments or declarations it signed which promoted indigenous peoples' interests.

If indigenous peoples become obstacles to achieving this goal, then they have to be dealt with harshly. This is seen in the recent massacre of 45 Mayan people (21 women, 15 children and 5 men) in Acteal, Chenalho, last December 22, 1997 by the police. The resistance of the Mayan Indians of Chiapas is met with increasing terror and violence by the Mexican National Army and the private armies and hired goons of the landlords and cattle barons.

The acknowledgement of the role of indigenous peoples in sustainable development is increasing as seen in Agenda 21 and other international declarations and agreements. With this development coupled with pressures by indigenous peoples, some governments made policies or laws which require prior consultation with indigenous peoples before development projects or corporations enter their communities. The rate at which these policies are violated, however, far outpace their implementation.

Colombia

In Colombia, after a sustained protest by 82 indigenous communities in Bogota, the government passed Decree 1397 in August 1996. This Decree established that before any project is started in indigenous peoples' lands mandatory consultations should be done. The mining and oil corporations hit back and complained that this Decree will inhibit foreign investors from coming into the country. Colombia's largest source of foreign revenue is in oil exploration.

The U'wa people who number only 8,000 and who are the ones directly affected by the oil exploration of Occidental Petroleum threatened to commit mass suicide if the exploration takes place (Abya Yala News 1997). The Supreme Court released a ruling in February 2, 1997 which says that the government is given 30 days to consult with the U'wa. The government retains the right, however, to decide whether to allow Occidental Petroleum to explore or not. Colombia also ratified ILO Convention 169.

We see in these cases that being a signatory to a legal instrument or having national laws promoting indigenous peoples' rights is not a guarantee for the protection of these rights. This is becoming more the situation with globalization where the capacity of nation-states to regulate the market is considerably undermined. We have seen time and again how governments who get caught between indigenous peoples and corporations would go for protecting corporate rights.

The face of globalization in the Philippines

The colonization of the Philippines by Spain, the United States, and Japan led to its integration into the global market economy. Even after it gained political independence in 1945 from the United States, the colonial master ensured that its economy is still under its control. The country remained a cog in the wheel of the global market economy. It is a supplier of cheap raw materials and labour-intensive manufactures and a market and dumping ground for the expensive and sometimes hazardous products and technologies from the North. It is also a source of cheap labour, and a tax-haven for foreign investments.

During the Marcos dictatorship, the Philippines became heavily debt-ridden. In 1968, three years after Marcos gained power, the foreign debt was US$599 million. By 1970, after he spent $50 to $100 million for his re-election, the foreign debt went up to $2 billion. By 1983 this debt surged up to $24.6 billion. The Philippine government had to devalue the peso twice and declared a moratorium on debt payment (Santos 1989). When Marcos was finally ousted in 1986, the foreign debt he left was almost $26 billion. Since the Philippines got caught in the debt-trap, the country had to adopt the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) of the IMF-WB before it could avail itself of subsequent loans.

The standard SAP conditionalities include the following (Ofreneo 1997):

- privatization of government-owned corporations;
- austerity in government spending which means freeze in hiring and raising of wages, cutting down subsidies for electricity, water, and reducing public spending in education, health and social welfare services;
- 'liberalization of import procedures, tariff reforms, strengthening of fiscal incentives for exporters, and administrative actions to promote and facilitate exports' (World Bank 1980); and
- the devaluation of the currency to make exports cheaper and more competitive.

Legislations which allow further liberalization had to be pushed. An important legislation which ushered the entry of a significant number of foreign firms is Republic Act 5490 of 1969 which provided for the creation of a Foreign Free Trade Zone Authority otherwise known as the Export Processing Zone Authority (EPZA).

The incentives offered to the foreign investors are as follows:

- 100 per cent foreign ownership;
- the waiver of minimum registered investment;
- no duties, taxes, or license fees;
- priority in foreign exchange allocations;
- speedy administrative procedures;
- right to borrow money within the Philippines with government guarantees;
- unrestricted repatriation of profits;
- strict clampdowns on unionization and collective wage bargaining.

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Four main EPZs were set up in the country: Mariveles, Bataan; Mactan, Cebu; Silang, Cavite; and Baguio City. In 1995 there were 200 firms located in these EPZs. The majority of these are garments and electronics firms. Many indigenous women from the Cordillera region got employed in the Baguio Export Processing Zone.

The Omnibus Investment Code of 1987 (Executive Order No. 226) increased the incentives for foreign investors. Some of the fiscal and non-fiscal incentives include an income tax holiday of six years for new pioneer firms and four years for non-pioneer firms; tax and duty-free importation of capital equipment, machinery and accompanying spare parts within five years from effectivity of the Code; tax credits on domestic capital equipment and for taxes and duties on raw materials, supplies and semi-manufactured products. Foreign nationals in supervisory, technical and advisory positions are allowed to work and are exempted from personal income obligations.

Philippines 2000

The Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) for 1993-1998 otherwise known as Philippines 2000 was formulated to continue the programs started by Cory Aquino. It is a master plan which seeks to reinforce further the economy which is export oriented, import dependent, and debt-driven. This practically opens up the whole country to foreign investments not only in mining but in agriculture, services and other strategic and non-strategic areas.

The neo-classical economic framework of liberalization, privatization, deregulation and cutbacks on social and public spending is what undergirds the Philippines 2000. The primacy of the market is paramount. This means passing on all profitable activities to the market, regardless of the social and environmental impact. Social services like education, health, and public utilities like water and energy should be privatized. Philippines 2000 is the contribution of the Ramos regime to the globalization agenda of transnational corporations and the advanced capitalist countries.

The language which was popularized by the UN and non-government organizations (NGOs) was effectively coopted by the Ramos regime and got enshrined in Philippines 2000. These are terms like peoples' empowerment, sustainable development, civil society, etc. Philippines 2000, however, does not intend to empower people nor build and strengthen the domestic economy. In fact it will do the opposite, it will kill the small-scale firms and farms. It will also seriously impact on indigenous women.

Feminization and flexibilization of labour in industry and services

The feminization and flexibilization of labour is one of the basis of the growing international competitiveness of the Philippines. The cutthroat competition between labour-surplus countries, especially those into garments, footwear, and electronics and micro-electronics production, is very favorable for transnational corporations. Comparative advantage means that the country which can offer the lowest wages and least benefits and welfare for workers will have a bigger advantage in attracting foreign corporations.

The cheap and docile labour which is the comparative advantage of the Philippines over industrialized countries are actually women who are willing to accept any kind of employment, no matter how oppressive. Flexibilization of labour is an instrument used by the capitalists to bring down the wages and to be absolved of giving benefits to their workers. This phenomena of flexibilization has developed widely because of globalization. The competing countries have to offer the most attractive packages for the foreign investor to come in. The best combination which the Philippine government can offer is feminized labour which is flexible.

Flexible labour is practised in the country in several ways:

- job subcontracting - some aspects of the manufacturing process (packaging, maintenance, assembling garments, etc) are subcontracted to part-time workers outside the factory setting;
- piece-rate or quota system - workers whether inside or outside the factory are required to meet certain quotas within a defined period of time, then they are paid on a piece-rate basis;
- casualization - non-regular employment where you can be under probation for as long as 2 years, but before you go on probation you have to work as an apprentice or become a learner or trainee;
- increased number of shifts per day or forcing the workers to work for as long as 20 hours a day.

This cheap labour which can withstand the intensity and tedious demands of assembling garments, integrated circuits, and other electronic and micro-electronic components comes in the form of young and single women. Thus, a picture of the labour force in the export-processing zones and the non-EPZs (i.e. the garment and electronic factories outside of the EPZs) in the past 20 years would show a female-dominated labour force. 70-85 per cent of the total employment in these areas are women. Homeworkers which are involved in garment and linen manufacturing are 90 per cent women.

Some quarters claim that globalization, especially the creation of industrial enclaves like the EPZ, has created tens of thousands of jobs for women and therefore this is a positive impact. However, this does not mean that these women are no longer oppressed and discriminated. They were just moved from one situation of oppression to another. It may be true that women are moved away from the household to the industrial estates (i.e. export processing zones), and by being wage-workers they have achieved a certain level of economic independence from their husbands or fathers. However, at the workplace they are subjected to other forms and more severe problems of gender discrimination.

In the past 20 years the labour force in low-technology, labour-intensive, and occupationally hazardous industries (e.g. electronics, garments) have been increasingly dominated by females. There is also feminization in the service industry as can be seen in the retail trade, tourism, telecommunications and banking. Even the export labour market is now more in need of women who will work as domestic helpers, entertainers, and workers in foreign electronic and garment factories.

The liberalization of agriculture

Agriculture is one of the sectors which heavily bears the brunt of globalization. The CARP (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program) which the Aquino and Ramos governments proclaim as their cornerstone program, is undermined by many exemptions and loopholes. The very nature of the Philippines 2000 in itself will not really allow the genuine implementation of agrarian reform. Many of the ancestral lands of the indigenous peoples in the country are not covered by agrarian reform. However, the government's pre-occupation to make its exports globally competitive directly affects the land tenure situation and production processes of indigenous peoples.

The agricultural production of major crops in the country has stagnated and even shrunk. The aggregate value of major crops produced in 1995 shrunk by 1.5 per cent. The shrinkage in the production of major food and traditional export crops - rice (-2.5%), corn (- 0.17%), sugar cane (-35.8%) and abaca (-7.8%) - has led to the net loss of 125,000 jobs in agriculture in 1995.

While the government has natural calamities as a convenient scapegoat to be blamed every time growth in agriculture drops, the main reasons for this are the following:

- persistence of landlordism and very poor implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP);
- land use conversions to escape from CARP;
- crop conversions due to the restructuring of agricultural production to meet demands of global market;
- exploitative practices of landlords-usurers-merchants in collusion with government agencies like the National Food Administration (NFA).

The loss of livelihoods, the loss of lands leading to massive outmigration to the urban areas, and the consequent food insecurity, are the direct impacts of globalization on agriculture and on those whose lives depend on agriculture.

In order to conform with the GATT commitments the Philippine government has passed several laws[2] that liberalize agriculture. Some of these laws directly favour the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program and the development of high value crops, while others effectively nullify or directly contradict the objectives of sustainable development, an oft-repeated phrase in the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP), for instance by removing import restrictions which hitherto had provided protection for local agricultural products like vegetables, beef and seeds[3].

Impacts on indigenous women

These changes in the laws have far reaching effects on indigenous women. The majority of indigenous women are still owner-tillers mainly engaged in subsistence food production. However, there is a significant section which is involved in cash crop production. After colonization some productive agricultural areas in the Cordillera and Mindanao have been converted into commercial gardens, rice farms, and plantations.

Agricultural liberalization is what the Medium Term Agricultural Development Program (MTADP) of the Aquino and Ramos governments is all about. This section will look into the actual and potential impacts this program has on indigenous women.

Inability to compete with imported crops

The removal of the protection given to locally-produced crops like cabbage, potatoes, onions, coffee, etc. has led to the entry of cheaper surplus agricultural products. It is estimated that there are 50,000 potato growers in the vegetable gardens of Benguet in the Cordillera whose livelihoods have been affected because of this. They could hardly compete with the imports coming in. Machine-sliced ready-to-fry potatoes from the United States led to the collapse of potato prices by almost fifty percent of the price in 1990 (Oliveros 1997).

Earlier, some transnational food corporations like McDonald's and Wendy's entered into contract-growing arrangements[4] with Benguet farmers for the production of potatoes. The contractual arrangements are usually lopsided in favour of the corporation. It is high risk whenever natural calamities occur. Nevertheless, the indigenous farmers still entered into these deals. With the entry of imported ready-to-fry potatoes, however, such arrangements have shifted to the production of seeds.

In Polomok, South Cotabato, Dole Philippines, Inc. (Dolefil) started contract growing arrangements in 1995 with the help of the National Development Corporation and the DAR. About 3,400 hectares of land were covered by the farm management contract system. The farmers who own these lands were forced to enter into contract growing arrangements so they can generate cash to pay for the amortization of their CLTs (Certificate of Land Transfer) and CLOAs (Certificate of Land Ownership Awards).

However, the production of pineapples which meet Dole's standards is very high risk. In most cases the farmers cannot survive with the lump sum paid to them by Dole. When natural calamities occur the farmers will always lose out and they end up leasing or selling back their lands to Dole. Contract growing arrangements, in effect, makes them hired labourers on their own lands.

Now more than ever, the farmers are in no position to dictate the prices of their crops. Thus, during the times that the prices fall the farmers just allow the vegetables to rot in their gardens and be used as fertilizers. The production costs which include the costs of agrochemical inputs, seeds, irrigation, transporting the vegetables from the gardens to the roads and to the markets, etc. far exceed whatever they can earn.

While the Agriculture Tarification Act still provides for tarification of the products cited below, data shows that even if these were slapped tariffs of 100 per cent their prices will still come out cheaper than the local products. The table below shows this:

Table 1: *Compared prices for locally produced and imported agricultural products (in Philippines Pesos/kilogrammes)*

PRODUCT	LOCALLY PRODUCED	IMPORTED
Garlic	87.49	17.61
Onion (red)	18.97	8.72
Cabbage	10.28	7.33
Potato(white)	12.62	9.00
Sugar (raw)	10.14	6.29

The erosion of control over genetic resources and indigenous knowledge

With the repeal of the Seed Industry Development Act which prevented the importation of seeds produced locally, the indigenous peasant women are at the mercy of transnational agribusiness corporations (TNC). Seed growing for rice and corn in the Philippines is monopolized by Cargill-Ayala and Pioneer-San Miguel, a subsidiary of Pioneer Hi-Breed, the world's number one seed corporation.

In the Cordillera the main sources of certified seeds used in vegetable and cut-flower production are Japanese corporations like

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Takiis and Sakata and US corporations like Condor. There is a shift in contract-growing arrangements now from the production of crops for food to the production of seeds. The farmers are growing seeds for the corporations which contracted it to them.

Agro-corporations are poised to expand their markets to control and manage germplasm and genetic stocks in strategic food communities. With farmers becoming more dependent on imported seeds, patenting will give the companies the huge profits in the exercise of exclusive rights to these seeds. This further strengthens their total control over agricultural production in the country. Foreign agricultural TNCs will be able to monopolize seeds and agricultural technologies from the patent laws. Since monocultures are more appropriate for wide-scale commercial agricultural production the use of certified seeds will become more widespread.

The Green Revolution which was implemented in the Philippines as early as the 60s has significantly diminished the number of indigenous seed varieties in rice. Indigenous peasant women who are the traditional seed custodians were encouraged to shift to the use of the high yielding varieties (HYVs) developed by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI). This was the case especially with the women found in the agriculturally rich lowland areas of Kalinga, Abra and Ifugao. Even some subsistence farmers also shifted to HYVs.

The increasing control of seed and biotechnology corporations over the seeds used in agriculture is marginalizing the indigenous peasant women. The TRIPS (trade-related intellectual property rights) clause in GATT provides for the protection of the intellectual property rights (IPRs) of corporations who are able to demonstrate that their product is novel, can be commercially produced, and used in trade. The knowledge over the indigenous seed varieties is with farmers and indigenous women. However, the TRIPS provision will facilitate the appropriation of this knowledge and genetic resource from them into the hands of TNCs.

These corporations have the technology of genetic engineering which will allow them to do 'innovations' over indigenous seeds and claim that their end product, the genetically-engineered seed, is novel. This will enable them to claim IPRs over these making them the legal owners of such 'innovation' and therefore should be paid royalties or patent fees for the use of such products. The TRIPS clause disallows farmers from reproducing freely such seeds without paying the necessary fees.

To ensure that the TNCs will continue reaping profits from these seeds, they will push for the use of these on wider tracts of lands. This they will do either through their control over plantations or through legislations and government policies which they can easily influence. Monoculturalization of agriculture is the logical result of high technology agriculture.

Undermining of the rights of indigenous women to their ancestral lands and to self-determination in agricultural programs

Massive land and crop conversions are resulting in the further concentration of lands in the hands of transnational agri-business corporations and a few landlords. Bureau of Soils and Water Management reports show that in 1991 118,000 hectares of irrigated lands were converted into non-agricultural uses.

Under the MTADP, the lands used for the production of crops for domestic food needs have been reduced. It has determined that more lands should be converted to become Key Production Areas (KPAs) and Agrarian Reform Communities. These are designed to produce export winners or high value crops (HVCs). HVCs are plants like cut-flowers (chrysanthemums, anthuriums, statice, roses, etc.) and temperate vegetables and fruits such as asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, peas, strawberries, pears, etc. Most of these are produced in the Cordillera region by the Igorots. In Mindanao on the ancestral lands of the Lumads, the crops being produced are orchids, pineapples, bananas, asparagus, durians and other exotic tropical fruits.

The WTO Agreement pushes countries to produce agricultural exports rather than food for subsistence. Under the Philippines 2000 the Ramos government is already zoning the rural landscape under its KPA approach. With its emphasis on agricultural efficiency and comparative advantage, the government encourages the development of economies of scale. KPAs will mean large-scale mechanized farms which will use agrochemicals intensively to produce crops at less cost and greater profit. Dependence on the global market encourages the shift into high-technology and ecologically destructive monocropping systems.

These will undermine the rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral lands. It will likewise undermine genuine agrarian reform and encourage the bankruptcy of small farms. The further concentration of ownership of big landholdings to landlords and agribusiness TNCs is an inevitable result. Some of the big corporations which are engaged in HVC production are Dole Philippines, Del Monte Philippines, Marsman Estate Plantation, Davao Fruits Corporation and Tagum Agricultural Development Foundation.

Many big corporations took advantage of the law RA 7900 which provides incentives to agri-business corporations that go into export crop production. Some of these are San Miguel Corporation, Nestle-Philippines, Guthrie, Janoub-Malaysia which intensified their productions of so-called 'export winners' such as palm oil, mango and pineapple. As a result of this, vast tracts of agricultural land previously devoted to staple crops are converted into export crop plantations. The further concentration of land and production capacity in the hands of few landowners and TNCs is worsening leaving hundreds of thousands of indigenous peasant women insecure over their rights to their ancestral lands.

In the Cordillera region some of the areas determined to become KPAs are Benguet which will produce more broccoli and cut-flowers, Mountain Province for fruits like lychees, pears, and oranges, and Abra for mangoes. In Mindanao the areas which are planted with bananas and pineapples will diversify into the production of asparagus, mangoes, and palm oil.

Statistics show that among the selected HCVs the ones produced in areas where indigenous peoples live command the biggest volumes and higher values. These are crops like pineapple, mangoes (mainly produced in Mindanao), strawberry which come from the Cordillera, coffee and asparagus which come from the Cordillera and Mindanao.

The design of the MTDAP is to ensure that the commitments of the government to the WTO are met. To facilitate the implementation of this, the government gets loans from international financing institutions like the World Bank or Asian Development Bank (ADB). In 1996 the Philippine government obtained a loan of US$44 million from the ADB and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for a project called CHARM. This is the Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project which operates in Mountain Province, Abra and Benguet. This project helps facilitate the shift from subsistence to high value crops production. The areas which are not included in CHARM will be covered by

CECAP (Central Cordillera Agricultural Program). This is a European Commission Overseas Development Aid Program which has virtually the same objectives as CHARM.

Threatened food security

Historically, the food security of the country was already compromised in 1953 when the Magsaysay regime signed the Agricultural Commodities Agreement with the US, a neo-colonial trade agreement which committed the country to perpetually import US agricultural surplus.

The series of IMF-WB Structural Adjustment Programs' conditionalities to liberalize trade and especially that of agricultural crops are a further threat. The deregulation move in 1984 was the removal of quantitative restrictions on importation of staple crops. Under the Aquino regime, 200 items were deregulated which included major vegetable and fruit crops. Then the Ramos regime further liberalized the importation of rice, poultry and meat products.

Aside from giving the control of the food industry to foreign transnational corporations, the government has also allowed the control of the Binondo Cartel over rice production and trading. This cartel, which is also known as the Big Seven, controls 45 per cent of the rice supply in Metro Manila and 39 per cent in the whole of Luzon. It also controls 35 per cent of rice production. They can therefore create artificial rice shortages if they want to raise the price of rice as what happened in early 1996. The price of rice had risen by 135 per cent since 1992 and during the 'rice crisis' in early 1996 it rose by another 61.3 per cent.

It is true that the lowering of food prices due to competition from cheap imported food will initially benefit the consumers. However, once the local production is eroded and the country's food security becomes totally dependent on the foreign market, the prices will soar high.

Food importation is also a dangerous proposition because foreign exchange is used to pay for imports. This means that a foreign exchange crisis can bring about food scarcity especially if the country mainly imports its staple foods instead of producing it locally. This is why it is important that the local production of domestic food needs should still be given protection and support by the government.

The MTADP pushed for the reduction of lands planted to rice and corn from 5 million hectares to 1.9 hectares only. The remaining 3.1 million hectares will be used primarily for HVC production but around 300,000 hectares are allotted for real estate subdivisions, golf-courses, theme parks, and some industrial estates. This is most ironical, considering that rice is the staple food in the country.

The removal of support and protective mechanisms for local agricultural production started with SAP conditionalities and is further reinforced under the WTO.

For rice, the quantitative restriction on importation was not removed. However, the Philippine government has committed a minimum access volume (MAV) to GATT/WTO when it signed the agreement. The commitment stipulates that the MAV will increase each year until quantitative restrictions are totally removed. For 1995 the MAV is 59,000 metric tons and in the year 2005 this will go up to 239,000 metric tons.

One of the deregulation moves carried out by the government in compliance with SAPs is the deregulation of the marketing of staple crops carried out by the National Food Authority (NFA). In the mid-1980s the Philippine government committed to reduce NFAs grains procurement and completely phase it out by 1998 in exchange of a loan of US$300 million in 1987, an $80 million grant from USAID in 1991, and P125 million loan from ADB in 1993 (IBON 1994). Other commitments which were conceded by the government are the following:

- reduction of the subsidy of NFA from P3.6 billion to P2 billion, and by 1998 this will be totally removed;
- suspension of lending scheme to farmers;
- removal of quota restrictions defined under the Magna Carta for Small Farmers;
- removal of subsidies for fertilizers.

Local production is also suffering because of the reduction or withdrawal of agricultural subsidies. The budget of the Department of Agriculture has already been reduced by almost 50 per cent, from P16.6 billion to P9 billion in 1994. Even before GATT was signed the National Food Authority had announced its new financing scheme which will impose a total phase out of corn procurement in 1994 to be followed by rice in 1998.

These are all preparations for the privatization of government bodies such as the NFA. With the cut in budget much needed support mechanisms such as rural credit, irrigation structures, farm to market roads, food storage, were either decreased or removed altogether. Otherwise the government's option is to acquire loans through projects like CHARM.

Increasing health hazards for indigenous women and the further degradation of the environment

The MTDAP's goal is to cut down land use in agriculture by 30 per cent but to maintain a high level of productivity. This means the more extensive use of high technology agriculture which are agrochemicals and genetically-engineered seeds and bio-pesticides. These technologies which are developed and controlled by agricultural and biotechnology transnational corporations are highly protected by the intellectual property rights.

The multi-million peso vegetable industry in Benguet extensively uses huge quantities of toxic agro-chemicals. In 1992 it was estimated that in Benguet alone 124,933 litres of insecticides were used (*Philippine Daily Inquirer* 26.12.1994). The total value of chemicals sold in Benguet in 1992 is around P165 million which was used on 10,414 hectares of land.

This so called modernization of crop production or high technology agricultural production has the net effect of further concentrating the control of agriculture in the hands of agro-chemical and biotechnology transnational companies. A list of 51 pesticides currently being sold in Baguio and Benguet would show that most of these are products of companies like Hoechst, Bayer, DuPont, Senecca, Ciba-Geigy, etc. (Cheng & Bersamira 1997).

The impacts of agricultural modernization on the environment will worsen. These range from the degradation of soil fertility (in the Philippines there is already 70 per cent degradation of soils), massive land degradation, the pollution of water aquifers, loss of natural enemies to pests, and the loss of biodiversity due to the use of fewer certified seed varieties.

The health of indigenous women, who are both producers and consumers, is compromised because of these technologies and because of the need of farmers to survive the cutthroat competition. High-value crops need massive amounts of pesticides and fertilizers which will be applied by the farmers. To cut down on production cost the use of protective equipments is dispensed with. High rates of pesticide poisoning are documented in the plantations of bananas, pineapples, and the commercial vegetable gardens.

This is the case with production of cut-flowers. A documentary entitled 'Women, Flowers and Death' which was released in 1986 showed the extent of pesticide use by women farm-workers in cut-flower plantations. Many of them are suffering from respiratory diseases, nausea, skin diseases, kidney diseases and blood poisoning. These are all traced to the toxic effects of the pesticides used.

To be able to survive the competition with cheap foreign imports some farmers also resort to the use of formalin to make their products last longer in the market. The use of formalin is prevalent with eggplants and string beans.

Another threat to the environment are massive land use conversion schemes such as the conversion of agricultural lands and forests into golf courses. Presently there are 70 golf courses in the whole country. Another 30 are in the pipeline for construction. Fil-Estate alone, is going to build 13 golf courses in the major provinces, including areas already planted to rice.

The environmental repercussions not to mention the social impacts are serious. It is estimated that one 18-hole golf course will occupy 85 hectares of land. This consumes 6,500 cubic meters of water daily, which is enough to irrigate 65 hectares of land which can produce 276,000 kilos of rice. This can also supply 15,000 residences in Metro Manila (*Philippine Daily Inquirer* 28 July 1996).

Tremendous environmental devastation and health hazards are brought about by mining operations. At the turn of the century commercial mining came into indigenous peoples communities and these are continuing up to the present. The globalization and liberalization of the mining industry led to the legislation of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995. Approximately 12 million hectares are covered by applications for mining operations. This is almost 40 per cent of the total land area of the whole country. More than half of this area covers indigenous peoples' communities.

The mining operations have led to the pollution of soils, rivers, rice-fields with toxic chemicals used in the extraction and processing of ores including the by-products. Mine tailings dam accidents happen frequently leading to destruction of marine biodiversity. The health problems of people in mining areas range from skin diseases, respiratory problems like tuberculosis, silicosis, and asbestosis, to reproductive problems. Drying up of water aquifers compounds the problem because proper sanitation cannot be maintained leading to gastro-intestinal diseases. Indigenous women have testified time and again how their burdens and problems increased because of these health and environmental problems caused by mining (Tauli-Corpuz 1997).

Destruction of indigenous economies and increased out-migration

The most direct effect of globalization on indigenous women is the significant shift from subsistence production to the production of cash crops. It was mentioned earlier that around 60-70 per cent of indigenous women are small owner-tillers who are engaged in subsistence food production. The traditional production and resource management systems which indigenous peoples have depended upon and developed over hundreds of years are seriously threatened.

Indigenous methods of production and resource management are considered inefficient and backward by the global market economy whose mantra is global competitiveness and comparative advantage. The creation of key production areas is a major step in the full integration of indigenous economies into the global market. Hundreds of thousands of indigenous women will have to abandon their sustainable agricultural and resource management practices.

Government employment statistics show that in 1995, 128,000 agricultural jobs were lost. This is due to the land conversions taking place in areas identified as industrial estates and growth areas, such as the CALABARZON in Southern Luzon, the growth areas in Mindanao, etc. The indigenous peoples affected by these developments are the Dumagats in Southern Luzon and the Lumads in Mindanao. Many of the certificates of land transfer (CLTs) and ownership award (CLOAs) which the government has been bragging about as proof of its successful agrarian reform program are now being cancelled and confiscated by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). As early as December 1993, the DAR reported that 22,991 CLTs and CLOAs had been cancelled. These former beneficiaries of CLT/CLOA who are now referred to as leaseholders are now reverted back into being tenants. The former tenants become contractual farm workers.

In 1995, the National Federation of Peasant Organizations in the Philippines (KMP) estimated that 600,000 farmers in sugar, corn, rice and vegetable farms would be displaced with the flooding of cheap surplus imported agricultural products. 450,000 of these are sugar workers whose jobs are threatened because of the impending withdrawal of the US of its Sugar Import Quota from the Philippines and the plan of Sugar 2000 to use machines to replace the farm workers. Sugar production worldwide is very much threatened because of the commercial production of tissue-cultured sugar substitutes.

Others which will be displaced are 20,000-50,000 rice farmers, 45,000 - 62,000 corn farmers, and 40,000 to 50,000 vegetable farmers and farm workers.

The displacement from the rural areas has brought women to the urban centers and most of them end up with the urban poor in the slum areas. A great bulk of these women also have applied for overseas contract work. Because of the massive land conversions which took place in the Southern Tagalog region, this region is ranked number 3 in the list of regions with the biggest number of overseas contract workers (OCWs).

The out-migration of women from the countryside into the cities and urban centers and from the Philippines to other countries has increased tremendously over the past decade. Out-migration has a very destabilizing effect to women, especially those who have been involved with rural agricultural production most of their lives. Women are used to ease the unemployment problems in the country and to supply the much needed foreign exchange which will pay for the foreign debt of governments and corporations.

According to the Overseas Workers' Welfare Association (OWWA) in 1997 the total number of Filipinos OCWs is 6 million. 3 million are documented which means they are legal and 3 million are undocumented or illegal workers. The Cordillera region contributed 214,285 legal OCWs and 428,571 illegal. 80 per cent of the OCWs are women[5]. The main bulk of Cordillera OCWs are in Hongkong.

In 1994 the total number of Filipina domestic helpers was 70,000. For the first quarter of 1998 this figure has almost doubled to 138,000 (*Philippine Standard* 3 March 1998).

Increasing incidents of sexual abuse and violence against women

The frequency and magnitude of sexual harassments, abuse, and violence against women within the work place have increased. Male supervisors and managers in many companies do not hesitate to sexually harass women because there is a ready pool of unemployed women eager to change those who get fired because they complained.

The worst forms of abuse and violence are, however, reported by OCWs. Some employers in countries which traditionally have very low regard for women, treat their domestic helpers as slaves whom they can beat and rape anytime they want to. Since the Philippine government needs all these job openings to absorb the surplus labour, it hardly raises its voice with the governments of countries where these abuses happen.

According to OWWA (Overseas Workers Welfare Association), within 1996, 105 OCWs died outside of the Philippines, 49 came home mentally ill, and 62 came home with various physical disabilities. In 1995 there were 40,000 reported cases of abuse (Tujan 1995). Multifarious problems are met by the OCWs starting from the application process here in the country up to their places of work abroad.

While they are in the Philippines they are victimized by fake and unscrupulous recruitment agencies and recruiters. Huge amounts of money are fleeced from them and they are lucky if they do get jobs. For those who do get the jobs not everyone becomes a legal worker. A significant number are brought into the foreign countries illegally with the collusion of the recruitment agency itself, some airport and customs employees, and the partners of the recruitment agencies abroad.

The common complaints of the women OCWs range from overworking; day-offs and other promised benefits are not given; inhumane working and living conditions (e.g. absence of sleeping quarters, irregular meals and inadequate food, etc.); verbal, physical and sexual abuse; non-payment of wages, etc. Horrible stories of how women are degraded, oppressed, and how they become objects of the worst forms of physical and sexual violence have been reported and documented time and again from those who are working in the Middle East countries, Taiwan, Hongkong, Singapore and Malay-

Women from the Buhid people of Mindoro, Philippines taking a break.
Photo: Christian Erni

sia, Japan and Papua New Guinea. News of Filipina OCWs being raped, turned into sex slaves, becoming victims of white slavery, etc. are read almost daily in the papers.

Increasing social problems and family problems

The long absences of women from the homes because of overseas contract work have created a situation where many households of indigenous women are run by the men or by the grandparents. According to OWWA researches the incidents of incest and adultery committed by the husbands have increased. Many children of OCWs also indulge in anti-social activities like drug abuse, petty crimes, heavy drinking, etc.

Most men in the country are not socialized to nurture and care for the children. The departure of their wives to earn abroad leaves them with responsibilities they are not familiar with. When family problems occur and the woman abroad is confronted with oppressive working conditions, some of them become mentally unstable. The increasing frequency of OCWs coming home in a mentally deranged state is usually caused by a combination of all these various factors.

In many cases the absence of the mother means the responsibility is passed on to other women like the daughters, the grandmother or the sisters.

Increasing work load and worsening poverty

Women are known to bear the bigger burdens in subsistence food production, household work and in the informal economy. However, with the recent developments these burdens have multiplied.

With the cuts in budgets for social services and welfare under SAPs the women are burdened more than ever with unpaid work. The reproductive work of caring and nurturing the family, the tribe, and the community still remains the task of indigenous women. The meagre government institutions which are supposed to provide for basic health care services, day care, etc., are being closed down or given to private initiatives.

More than the men, women are the ones who get into the full range of economic activities in the informal economy. These range from entering as domestic helpers, accepting laundering of clothes, rearing of domestic animals for sale, vending of vegetables, fruits, fish, etc. The small-scale home-based handicraft industry run mainly by indigenous women is threatened by the liberalization of the garment industry. These women have been knitting sweaters and weaving blankets which enjoyed brisk sales in the 70s to late 80s. During those times it was common to see Igorot women in the Cordillera selling the knitted sweaters, bonnets, etc. in their stalls or in the sidewalks. Nowadays, what is seen more are Igorot women selling imported second-hand clothing, blankets, sheets, etc.

Since some of the women are still living in communities nearby the industrial estates they are also the ones who accept the subcontractual jobs like crocheting, embroidery, placing buttons on garments, making papier machés, ceramics, and other side activities like washing the bottles for the soft drinks corporations. Some of the younger women are pushed into prostitution.

Yet, the government claims an improvement in poverty figures from 37 per cent to 35 per cent in 1995. However, this is arrived at by tampering the figures. The World Bank has even coached the government to adjust the minimum food requirements downwards in order to get an even better reduction of the poverty statistics. It said that the poverty figures for the country will be reduced if the caloric standards which it will use is based on third world lifestyles not the US FDA (Food and Drug Administration) standards.

However, the government's own poverty threshold in 1988 inflated to current prices to P7,700 per month in 1994 would show that 70 per cent of Filipino families live below the poverty line. The majority of the poor are in rural areas and do not even earn enough to fulfil a family's monthly minimum food requirement of P3,125. Workers' wages have been eroded. The nominal daily wage of P145 is eroded to P63.80 at 1988 prices compared to wages then of P69.33 (*Philippine Daily Inquirer* 7.6.1996)

Dilemmas in handling the globalization agenda

The main feature of present-day globalization is the primary role given to the market to determine how goods and services should be produced and distributed. The market by its very nature is gender-blind. The logic it understands is the logic of competition, efficiency, and profit accumulation. Globalization which mainly relies on transnational corporations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, as its vehicles, likewise, can't be sensitive to gender issues unless it reinforces its agenda.

Globalization is antithetical to genuine development and gender-sensitive development, because it undermines sustainability at the local levels. This is where women can be more in control as seen in subsistence agriculture or in local marketing, micro-enterprises, local trading initiatives and in the informal economy. By diminishing the role of the state in the production and distribution of goods and services, it further disempowers institutions which can possibly legislate positive affirmation policies in favor of women.

The power to decide on how local economies should run is shifted to TNCs, the WB-IMF and the WTO. The GATT trade policies and rules which the WTO is implementing focuses more on how barriers to the trading interests of highly industrialized nations can be removed or liberalized. It does not deal with the social and environmental impacts of globalization.

In this WTO era, everything is being linked to trade. International trade becomes the end all and be all of economic activity, instead of being a means to economic development. The WTO Agreements have successfully integrated all domestic and national concerns into its scope for governance even if such are not directly trade related.

These are areas like investments, services, intellectual property rights, etc. It is empowered to ensure that peoples' cultures, ethical values, practice of democracy, use of knowledge, and even food habits become consistent with the global economic and trade rules it should safeguard.

Trade is now being linked to concerns like women's rights, human rights, environmental standards, etc. and are being used wrongly to promote protectionist goals of the industrialized nations. It is in this light that the handling of gender issues and indigenous peoples issues in the present globalization phase becomes more complex.

Feminists are divided on how to handle the issue. There are those who see globalization as inevitable and therefore what is needed is to see how women's perspectives can be integrated into the globalization agenda. Then there are those who see globalization in its comprehensive political-economic context and therefore won't just settle for integrating women's perspectives. Instead they are challenging the whole globalization project because it is inherently anti-women and anti-poor.

Indigenous peoples also have a diversity of views on how to deal with globalization. Most nation-states have institutionalized the oppression and discrimination of indigenous peoples. Thus we are not sure whether it is to our advantage that such states are further weakened to a point where they can't regulate the market and the corporations. Some indigenous peoples feel that it is even easier to deal with corporations directly than to have governments interfering.

On the other hand, the market economy and corporations are instrumental in eroding the sustainable indigenous economic systems. Many of the environmental problems confronting indigenous peoples have been caused by corporations such as those engaged in mining, oil extraction, logging, etc. The increasing power of the market to determine how indigenous peoples should live is already having disastrous effects. In most instances the government and corporations have colluded to appropriate the lands and resources of indigenous peoples.

What is clear from all the impacts discussed earlier, however, is that globalization is having more negative than positive impacts. The values perpetuated such as global competitiveness, homogenization, monoculturalization, commodification and gross consumerism are against many of our indigenous values and beliefs. Cultural and biological diversity and the diversity of economic and political systems which indigenous peoples have developed and sustained are seriously threatened by the globalization agenda.

It is to the interest of indigenous women to steadfastly challenge this globalization agenda. Any system which degrades and commodifies women should be challenged and changed.

Notes

[1] Cross-retaliation means that if a country is proven guilty of violating a trade agreement, the aggrieved party can retaliate against it in an area which can hurt the economic interests of the guilty party more effectively. For example, even if the area in dispute is trade in aquaculture products, if retaliation here will not hurt the guilty party significantly, the aggrieved party can cross retaliate by banning entry of gold or any other product which will have a more devastating impact.

[2] Some of the laws are the following:
1. Republic Act (RA) 7652 or the Land Lease Act, which extends the allowable land lease period from 25 years to 50-75 years for both local and foreign investors.
2. RA 7881 which exempts from CARP coverage all fish ponds, prawn farms and lands devoted to livestock, poultry and swine raising. It also exempts CARP implementation on commercial farms.
3. RA 7900 or the High Value Crops Development Act of 1995 - this gives incentives, tax holidays, and infrastructure support for agri-business corporations engaged in HVC production.
4. RA 8178 or the Agricultural Tarification Act which removes the restrictions on the importation of basic agricultural products sufficiently produced in the country, like corn, onion, garlic, potatoes, cabbage, coffee beans, as well as meat products like pork, beef and chicken.

[3] The laws which have been repealed are the following:
1. RA 1296 (1955) which prohibits importation of onion, potato, garlic and cabbage;
2. RA 2713 (1960) which bans importation of coffee beans;
3. RA 1297 (1978) which provides for centralized importation of beef;
4. RA 7607 or the Magna Carta for Small Farmers which prohibits the importation of agricultural products widely and sufficiently produced in

the country unless the Department of Agriculture declares a crisis or shortage of such products;
5. RA 7308 or the Seed Industry Development Act prohibiting the importation of seeds produced in the Philippines.

[4] Contract-growing is a form of hedging where the corporation (such as McDonald's) will estimate the amount of yield per hectare of land and will enter into a contract with the producer. The total cost of the expected harvest will be agreed upon by both parties. The corporation will provide all the inputs needed by the farmer to ensure the quality of the product. However, all these expenses will be paid back by the farmer when the harvest comes. If a calamity occurs and the yield is not delivered the farmer will still pay back the cost of inputs.

[5] Interview by author with Mila Pena, the Director of the OWWA Regional Office in the Cordillera Administrative Region, 26 February 1998, Baguio City, Philippines.

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CHAPTER 6

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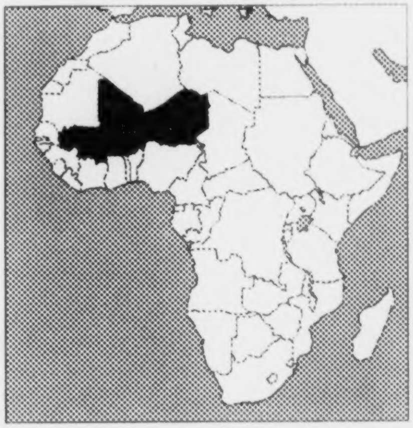
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

GETTING ORGANISED AND PARTICIPATING

Article 44 of the Beijing Declaration

> *We demand equal political participation in the indigenous and modern socio-political structures and systems at all levels.*

THE TUAREG WOMEN



Tuaregs have for centuries reigned in the Sahara and the adjacent regions, living as nomadic pastoralists and breeding camels, goats, cattle and sheep. Today, the Tuaregs, who number about one million people, find themselves divided as citizens in Algeria, Libya, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria.

In 1990, Tuaregs in Mali and Niger took up arms against the governments of both countries, basically as an answer to the cultural discrimination and military oppression they were suffering. Killings, rapes and even massacres spread panic and large numbers fled to Algeria, Mauritania and Burkina Faso, where refugee camps were opened. In the last few years, however, peace has been more or less restored and many refugees have returned home.

TUAREG WOMEN REFUGEES: HOW WE CREATED TIN HINANE

by Saoudata Aboubacrine

The consequences of the repression against the Tuaregs in Mali and Niger between 1990 and 1995 did not spare the women and children. As a matter of fact, they have been the most affected.

Due to the amplitude of the massacres in Mali, in 1994-1995, the number of refugees in Burkina Faso considerably increased compared with preceding years. It was as the result of this crisis that we, the Tuareg women living as refugees in Burkina Faso, decided to work together in order to bring viable solutions to the multiple problems we are facing.

Working together

After sharing our ideas, we decided to help each other and to collaborate with all those who show solidarity with our cause, especially the various agencies, NGOs and women's associations who share our interests. These interests are to secure a better integration into the economic, cultural and social development while safeguarding our cultures and our traditions, to promote and defend our rights, and to protect the environment.

The role and place occupied by women in our society strengthen the hope and courage of Tin Hinane[1] to offer a satisfactory contribution. We especially count on the intellectual, physical and moral work in order to reach our objectives at the national level as well as at the African and global level.

It is within this spirit that Tin Hinane in Burkina Faso is convinced that the framework of a non-profit and non-political association will allow us, in an efficient way, to put our capacities together. Today Tin Hinane has some 200 members. It works not only with refugee women but also with Burkinabe women of Tuareg extraction. They all consider themselves as being nomads even if some of them have settled in Ouagadougou, Bobo, Déou and other larger towns in Burkina Faso. Tin Hinane is also open to non-Tuareg nomad women, like the Fulani (or Peul) women, but has as yet not been approached by any of them.

Identifying problems and priorities

Consultations with women members of various groupings have allowed the association to identify a certain number of problems.

Women often have insufficient or even no income to satisfy their own nutritional and sanitary needs as well as that of their families. Among the nomadic population, women and children have been the first to suffer from the proliferation of several infectious diseases.

As a rule the women are not sufficiently informed about their rights and duties in today's society, and being illiterate does not facilitate their integration in society.

Finally, the nomadic women also suffer from the degradation of the environment in the zones of temporary settlement.

The exchange of views which we have had on these problems has resulted in the definition of certain concerns and priorities regarding nomadic women. It is for instance important to support the establishment of women's groupings and associations where women can share their work experiences and techniques and develop their communal spirit. These women's groupings should be supported in the design of activities which can generate some income that will allow them to survive and to become less dependent on external resources. At the same time women should also be informed and sensitised about their rights and obligations.

Other priorities are the struggle against infectious diseases, nutritional education, literacy, school education for children and especially girls, and protection of the environment.

Special attention should be given to the preservation of traditional medicine, a knowledge which especially belongs to women and which should be supported by all possible means like, for instance, training, research and propagation in the media.

Finally, it is important to facilitate women's integration into local groupings as well as into national and international associations.

In the Tuareg society the woman is the keeper of the social, intellectual and cultural values. She constitutes a pillar in the family and the society. She ensures the education of her children and especially of her daughters. She is the counsellor and even takes important decisions in the family and society. She safeguards social understanding and cohesion. Therefore strengthening this very important role also means safeguarding the social understanding and cohesion in our society.

Tuareg woman from the Kel Ataram group, western Niger.
Photo: Ida Nicolaisen

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It must be emphasised that the marginalisation of most of our members in their place of residence is strongly connected to their social and cultural differences. Our objectives are aimed at contributing on a mid and long term basis to giving women a social position so that they can in all dignity integrate themselves in the local women's movements in order for them to be able to assert their points of view on the questions that concern themselves. This integration constitutes a determinant element in the process of creating synergy between the various social groupings.

Evolution of the women's struggle

In the precise case of the refugee women there has been an evolution. However, our struggle still remains little known. We are progressing very slowly.

Within the framework of human rights we have participated since 1996 in the sessions of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva. This has given us contacts and partnership relations with leaders within the promotion and defence of human rights and development. We have learned a great deal through these meetings. Before, we did not know about the existence of this important network which struggles for the promotion and protection of human rights in general and those of indigenous peoples in particular.

In Burkina Faso the refugee women are being very slowly integrated into the life of the country despite the inconveniences this creates. We have a training project for women on human rights whose objectives are to inform the Tuareg women about their rights and duties; to encourage them to struggle against ideologies of domination, whether this domination is economic, political, social or cultural; and to inform women about the stake and challenges in terms of violation of the human rights of marginalised indigenous peoples, the voiceless, those belonging to minorities, the tortured, the poor and the neglected.

More specifically, we aim at studying the possible ways and means for implementing regional and international texts on human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples.

We also aim at getting the women to exercise their rights so that they can have the same access as others to justice, peace, education, information and the environment. This will be done by training them in human rights, literacy and communication, and by arranging meetings with other organisations, seminars, conferences, etc.

In Niger women have been able to create and head Tuareg women sections at the level of political parties in towns like Niamey and Agadez. However, there hardly exist any women's associations for development. Women have therefore expressed their wish to join Tin Hinane.

In Mali, the situation has greatly improved since 1995. But poverty and scarcity persist especially in the north of the country, and the country is still facing overall political problems. The Tuareg women, most of them returnees from exile after the war, are well-organised and have brought back with them new and more appropriate work techniques. But they suffer from poverty. In most cases, they do not have the necessary financial means to implement activities. They too are increasingly interested in the promotion and defence of human rights.

The Tuareg women today

The role of women in the Tuareg society is being overlooked. This phenomenon is due to cultural traditions that demands them to adopt the greatest discretion in social life. One has to know their society well in order to see the very comprehensive social role played by women. While this does not limit Tin Hinane in establishing contacts with them, it does limit their capacity for participating actively. They have great difficulties attending meetings with other communities, or any other activity which requires them to leave their local organisations (work groupings, women's associations). The same applies for all public activities like meetings, conferences, etc. The women's sections in Niger are much less restrained in that respect.

These last years of crisis have destabilised the situation of the women. This means advantages and disadvantages. Among the advantages are the improved responsibility and consciousness of the women, their opening up to the external world. Another advantage is the acquisition of new work techniques that are more appropriate than the traditional ones and which can help them improve their work conditions.

On the other hand, women have experienced the loss of cultural values to the benefit of those prevailing in urban areas (towns or villages). This means in most cases that the status of women has declined compared with their traditional position. Women belonging to the Mossi or the Bambara people have no decision-making power in their homes contrary to the Tuareg woman who is her husband's main adviser.

People's dependency on gifts has also deepened as a result of the questionable aid methods employed by agencies like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This means that many feel completely at a loss now that the UNHCR has closed down the refugee camps and put a stop to all aid assistance to the Tuaregs - including scholarships to young students.

Women's mobilisation should be supported

Today, women fight against wars, the loss of positive cultural values, illiteracy and poverty. They fight for the respect of human rights.

While some Tuareg men have faith in the women's dynamism and believe that they can greatly contribute to a positive change, others think that not respecting the traditional values will lead to a chaotic society where everything will eventually be lost.

Tin Hinane urges and encourages the action of organisations that support indigenous peoples. The ideal support is of course to encourage the mobilisation of indigenous women and strengthen their capacity to militate along with or sometimes without men.

Note

[1] Tin Hinane in Tamachek language means "the nomad woman". It is also the name of the Queen Mother of the Kel Tamachek, one of the Tuareg groups.

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GUARANI WOMEN FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY

by Cecilia Bulens

The Guaraní live in the Amazon and Chaco regions of Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil.

In Bolivia they total 40,000 and constitute the third largest indigenous group after the Aymara and the Quechua. They are divided into three language groups - Ava, Izozeño and Simba - but have similar cultural values.

A short history

The Guaraní first reached Bolivia at the end of the 15th century from Paraguay and Brazil. The first arrivals came in search of 'The Land without Evil'. This land of Guaraní mythology is the place where happiness, relaxation, abundance and freedom abound. They were directed there by their *Ipayes* (the shamans that were their guides). They founded communities and came to gradually dominate and assimilate the Chanes people. They also fought against the Incas.

The Guaraní lived in *malocas*[1] and in tents. They would gather for meetings when major decisions had to be taken. The General Assembly (*Ñemboati*) was composed of 6 vital elements: *Ñanderu reta*: our fathers; *Arakua iya reta*: the advisers; *Ñee iya reta*: the master of the word; *Ipaye reta*: the wise man; *Mburuvicha*: the authority; and *Pueblo*: the people, the grassroots.

This structure could be compared to the image of a horse with its rider: the Assembly is the rider and decision-maker; the Mburuvicha is the horse, the one that follows orders and goes where it is told.

Although women do not appear in this structure, they did have an indirect but important role to play. They were the dreamers and their dreams foretold the future. The elderly women would speak in public, though, when they drove the warriors to fight bravely. Their opinion was highly valued.

The Guaraní have a great sense of freedom. They use the word *Iyambae* to describe themselves, meaning 'he that has no master'. For this reason, when the Mburuvicha took a decision that the community did not agree with, they changed it or, in some cases, whole families would move somewhere else.

Upon the arrival of the Spaniards, the Guaraní people was forced to fight in defence of its land. Guerrilla warfare ensued and the Guaraní often came out on top.

The colonisers arrived with three weapons: the army, the missionaries and cattle. It was the last of these that finally defeated the Guaraní, as the large ranches gradually expanded, taking the land away from them.

The Spaniards used other methods to dominate the Guaraní like calling their Mburuvichas 'Captains' and affording these a series of favours. This resulted in some supporting the invaders against their own brothers.

With the establishment of the republic, the situation of the Guaraní remained unchanged. Towns were built with landowners occupying the best areas, supported by the army who put down any attempt at an uprising.

In 1892, a young Ipaye called for the liberation of the Guaraní and the expulsion of the *Karai* (non-Guaraní people). He gathered a great number of warriors and decided to fight the republican army head on, rejecting the guerrilla tactics that had proven so fruitful for the Guaraní. It resulted in a ferocious massacre and left the Guaraní in a state of complete disarray. The survivors were forced to flee to the poorest lands and to survive by taking part in the sugar cane harvest on the large plantations which entangled them in a system of permanent debt. Several communities were given to the colonisers or the army and were forced to live as bonded slaves. In this miserable situation of inhuman exploitation, some of the 'Captains' became contractors for the owners of the sugar plantations by selling off their brothers.

Under such duress it was the women who played a vital role in maintaining the cohesion of the community and ensuring the continuation of their language and most important cultural values. In fact many communities were left without men for up to six months a year.

In 1953, the government introduced an agrarian reform. This reform had no effect on the situation of the Guaraní in that it merely served to consolidate the gains of the large landowners.

From 1975 onwards, certain parishes and institutions began to express concern for the communities that lived in the Cordillera province[2]. They attempted to break the vicious sugar harvest circle by organising working parties within the communities.

The birth of the organisation

In 1985, the Centre for Research and Promotion of the Landless Labourers (CIPCA) and the Santa Cruz Development Corporation (CORDECRUZ) performed a study of the Cordillera province. A number of Mburuvichas took part and CIPCA assured the communities that the results would be forwarded via a series of workshops. The decision was taken for the Guaraní to create an organisation of their own in order to be able to take a common stand against their mutual problems.

In 1987, the Assembly of the Guaraní People (APG) was founded with participation in 6 regions. It was based on the PISE concept (Production, Infrastructure, Health, Education) that soon became the PISET concept (Territory-Land).

At first the leadership rotated every two months but this was quickly abandoned as inefficient and instead an Executive Secretary and five national representatives (one per section) were named for a year at a time.

The APG began to expand as the Guaraní from other provinces came to hear about the organisation, got organised in their region and joined the APG. Now there are 22 zones belonging to the APG, covering the whole Guaraní territory.

The APG affiliated itself to the Confederated Union of Agricultural Workers (CSUTCB) and was officially recognised by the government at an official event in 1992, where the centenary of the Kuruyuki massacre was commemorated.

The APG is established on three levels: communal, zonal and national, each with their PISET representatives and their Mburuvicha but the decisions are always taken by the assembly which is open to all.

Since the outset, the APG has been the highest representative authority for all the Guaraní: men, women, children, elderly people. However, the participation of women has passed almost unnoticed.

In 1987, the Rural Development Plan for the Cordillera (PDCC) was elaborated and a series of support institutions were created to carry out this plan in collaboration with the APG. These institutions, together with the APG, constitute the Co-ordinating Committee of the PDCC which in 1993 became the PDCG (Development Plan for the Guaraní Communities).

In 1991, after a series of meetings to discuss the participation of women, the co-ordinating group decided to create a special programme for the Guaraní women with the task of promoting equal participation of women in the sections and in decision-making.

The situation of Guaraní women

Guaraní women suffer marginalisation on three levels: as women, as poor people and as indigenous people. Guaraní culture is patriarchal and treats women as minors that go from the protection of their fathers to that of their husbands. Old age, however, gives women a certain amount of prestige in the community. Still, women do enjoy a relative amount of freedom. They are free to move wherever they wish within their communities and often visit other women and chat, while passing around the *poro*[3].

Women's groups had existed in the communities for many years, although mainly supported by Caritas (a Catholic organisation) or by nuns and evangelical organisations. These groups were often limited to receiving food for work and were often isolated from the communal organisation and from the other groups.

The Programme of Support for Guaraní Women (PAMG) began to work with these groups, concentrating their efforts on empowerment and consciousness-raising as to their situation as indigenous people and as women, through a series of workshops, courses and seminars. The response was instantaneous. In fact the women showed themselves to be keen to learn and understand. They began to participate, initially at a communal level by attending the assemblies, where they started to voice their opinions, and gradually succeeded in occupying positions of responsibility. The same phenomenon was repeated at a zonal level.

Such initiatives also provoked the interest of the men. They realised that the women were discussing the same problems that they did, and that they had something valuable to say. This has increasingly led to more importance being attached to mixed decision-making, although it should be said that women still prefer to meet among themselves in order to elaborate their proposals before presenting them at the mixed meetings.

In 1995, in a national meeting of women sponsored by PAMG, specific demands of women were reflected upon and the APG's national executive committee was questioned as to its posture towards women's issues. In the way of a response to this, the executive organised an assembly to discuss women's participation. This assembly was prepared in all the zones and marks a historic moment in the history of the APG in that it allowed the internal crisis of the organisation to reveal itself.

Two opposing visions

As a matter of fact, within the organisation there are two major tendencies: the areas which are in favour of the assembly and a democratic participation in the decision-making, and the *capitanías* or areas ruled by the Captains, a system inherited from the Spaniards, whereby it is the Captains themselves that represent the maximum authority and those who maintain close contact with the society at large (i.e. mayors' offices, the prefectures and other institutions). These Captains hold power for years under a system of family inheritance. In fact, the Great Captains that exist today are sons or nephews of previous Captains. In any case, their authority is not challenged by the assembly and they are not elected under a democratic system. The last executive of the APG was dominated by the Captains and none of the assemblies were invited to attend.

The assembly to discuss women's participation was attended by some 350 people, two thirds of which were women and one third men. The assembly decided to name a female president of the APG with the same powers as her male counterpart, and form a commission to restructure the organisation at a national level. This commission consisted of three women and two men.

From that moment onwards, the women have been accused of trying to divide the Guaraní people and disrespecting the traditional authorities, i.e. the Captains. The Captains refer to the Bolivian Constitution which recognises and respects the traditional authorities and the indigenous peoples' organisations. The Law on Popular Participation from 1994 also recognises the concept of Captain in its articles 1 and 171. Those Captains who consider themselves more 'traditional' take advantage of this rather textual argument to politically manipulate those zones who have organised at a later date, and try to make them see themselves as second category citizens.

The PAMG has been accused, too. In truth, the discontent goes much deeper and represents a conflict between two opposing visions of the world and of political participation, one which is democratic and one which is oligarchic. Tensions continue today and a compromise looks unlikely.

These divisions are reflected at the social and economic level. The areas run by assemblies enjoy a greater level of development and better public services like health and education, while those under the rule of the Captains are the poorest of the Guaraní people that continue to do the sugar harvests or work for the big landowners. However, it is the Captains that enjoy better relations with the spheres of national influence, because they spend more time in power and have the same vision as the Spaniards: it is easier to manipulate a single person than to control an assembly.

Regrettably, these internal conflicts weaken the demands of the Guaraní people towards the state. The real issue for the organisation is the struggle for the territory since most communities do not have enough land. In 1996, the INRA law (the law of the National Agrarian Reform Service) was passed. This law caused many debates and quarrels and led to the landless peasants and indigenous peoples taking part in a massive march in September, 1996. Although the law has many weak points, it represents a great step forward for indigenous peoples.

A large number of women participated in the march in the same way that they fight on a daily basis side-by-side with their men against problems of territorial boundaries and the occupation and invasion of lands that occur frequently. Unfortunately, the subject of the claims for Traditional Communal Lands is being manipulated by a small group and does not reach the bulk of the population. The women

Guaraní women in the September 1996 march. Photo: Alejandro Parellada

demand more information and training in this field as they see the solution of this issue as fundamental to the future of their people.

For these reasons, the great challenges faced by the Guaraní women are the following:

- to consolidate and strengthen their participation in decision-making and at an administrative level;
- to ensure that the central, most important themes are simply expressed and accessible for all: information is the basis of power;
- to ensure in their daily life that their development is treated as even-handedly as that of their men and children;

The Guaraní women, though, have in the last few years revealed their ability to become involved, to learn, to understand, to make proposals and to be a dynamic and vital element for development in the heart of the organisation, and at the communal, zonal and national level.

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Notes

[1] *Maloca*: a large building where up to 250 members of the same extended family lived together

[2] A province in the Santa Cruz Department where most of the Guaraní live, although the Guaraní territory stretches across five provinces in three different departments, i.e. the departments of Santa Cruz, Chuquisaca and Tarija.

[3] *Poro*: a dried and emptied calabash in which maté is mixed with sugar and is drunk through a sucking pipe. The *poro* is also a moment of relaxation much favoured by the women.

***Cecilia Bulens** is the co-founder of the Programme of Support for Guaraní Women (PAMG) and was until recently responsible for its training department.*

WEAVING AND GOAT-BREEDING HELP IZOZOG WOMEN TO ORGANISE

by Annie Oehlerich

The Izozog Guaraní total 7,000, and are one of the three Guaraní language groups.

Although many Guaraní still live as debt-slaves on the ranches in the Ingre area, the Izozog indians have been free since 1923 when the first village had its property rights recognised by the Bolivian state. Today they administer their own territory, including a 3.5 million hectares natural park which is managed by their organisation CABI (Captaincy of High and Low Izozog).

Guaraní society is distinctive for its traditional structure and is organised around a hierarchical Captain's office. Izozog is run by the Grand Captain and his advisers. Local problems, suggestions and development plans are taken care of by the Captain in collaboration with the members of the council of elders.

As a rule, the traditional person in authority is a man. Women Captains do exist, however, but it is a rare thing and indigenous women most often go unnoticed in Amazonian political organisations: The men take care of the outward political struggle while the women organise themselves around productive projects - and put the food on the table.

The women of La Brecha

The wind roars through the Chaco plain in eastern Bolivia. The road is one, big dust storm. I am on my way, together with the Guaraní leader Felicia Barrientos, to visit some of the villages where the hard-working Izozog women have set up their businesses.

Under a shady *toporochi* tree the men sit and hold their meeting, only disturbed by the children playing with the goats. The men's working day is over, having been out hunting and labouring in the forest since sunrise.

The women's working day is not over, though. Once they have finished with their household chores in the huts, they meet up for a few cups of *mate* (herbal tea) in the shop, the women's shop.

They discuss how business has been today. Rice, sugar and tea have been brought from the nearest trading centre. A number of white farmers arrive with a few kilos of cheese which is later sold. More women join the group as they finish their domestic labours.

The women of Izozog are industrious people. In 1997 alone, they supplemented their household economy by US$10,000 from sales from the small women's shops that are found in 23 villages scattered over the Izozog territory. For the time being most of the profit has been safely deposited in the bank.

The shop in La Brecha is full of children's clothing, plastic earrings and hair adornments. There can be no doubt that it is the women who take charge of buying, even the vegetables from their collective field line the shelves. It's a thriving business. The store is only open when the shopkeeper has time. Responsibility for running the store is taken by turn. Each year they choose the girl that has achieved the best school results for arithmetic.

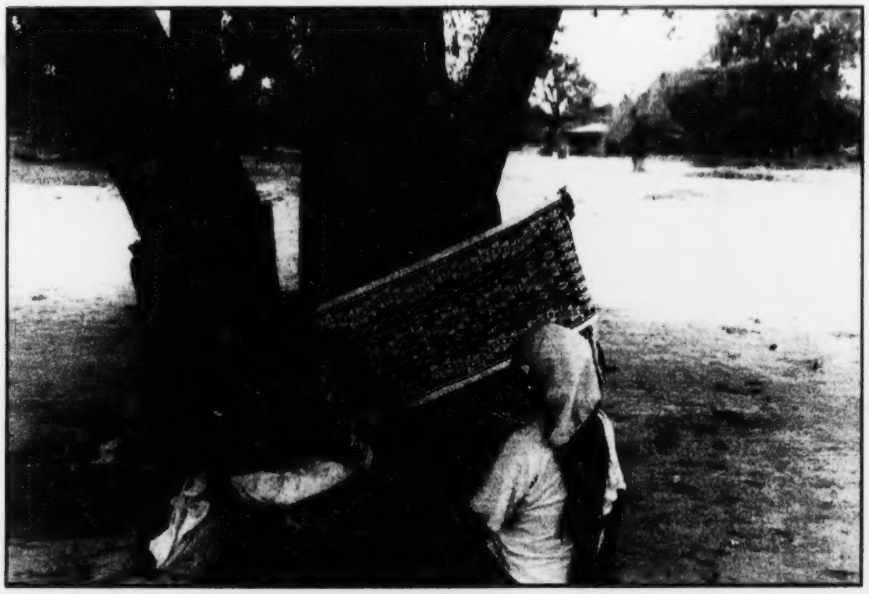
Getting organised

The women's custom of organising themselves around the store first began in 1979.

> *Before it was always the men who met and talked about problems but then we began to ask ourselves why we didn't do the same, meet and discuss our rights,*

explains Felicia Barrientos, who represents the Izozog women within the lowland Indians' organisation, CIDOB[1]. While she washes cotton seeds, she tells the story of how she and the other women organised themselves.

> *It started with a few Catholic nuns setting up mothers' clubs, where us women used to sit and sew clothes. We then expanded the*



Eladia Chavarra, president of the Women's organisation, showing one of the cloths the women weave for the shops. Photo: Annie Oehlerich

mothers' clubs and began to recover the old weaving techniques. The nuns would appear every eight days and exchange our wares for oil and grain. They gave us yarn to weave more cloth but never paid for the finished goods.

Then, in 1986, we began to receive help from Artecampo (a Bolivian NGO) who helped us to set up our own project. We then started to produce handicrafts in every village and to get our goods sold in Santa Cruz. In turn, one woman from each village was sent to Santa Cruz to take a course in administration and sales techniques.

At first we chose younger women but then the older ones became annoyed and asked why they should be left behind and said that they wanted to learn, too. Now many, both young and old, have been on courses.

Our sales went well and we began to make money for ourselves. We women became a little more independent. We had new ideas and some started chicken farms while others reared goats.

Felicia Barrientos explains further:

> *But the nuns thought things were going too well. They began trying to impose their will on us and tried to stop us working with Artecampo. We didn't want to do that so the nuns told us that we had to choose. We made our decision and asked the nuns to leave. We stayed with Artecampo until 1995 when we received help from CABI, the Izozog people's own organisation, in creating our own independent women's organisation, with its own secretariat under CABI leadership.*

Felicia gives a detailed historic account of the women's organisation CIMCI - Central Indígena de Mujeres Capitanía Izozog - which she is so familiar with, having been there from the start. It was largely her experience with that work that prepared her for her current position at CIDOB, where she is responsible for organising the Izozog women, as well as coordinating with other indigenous women's organisations in South, Central and North America.

How do you deposit money in the bank?

There are other women apart from her who, at various levels, have earned themselves some very important experience through manufacturing and selling. In each *comunidad* or village women have organised themselves into a local association with its own executive board which is responsible for manufacturing, running the stores or for the work in the fields. One of the women giggles when she explains the development that she has undergone at a personal level since she started working with the other women:

> *The first time I went into a bank in Santa Cruz, I was really, really scared. I didn't know how to withdraw or deposit money into our account, and I was too shy too ask,*

says Angela Segunda. Now she is an experienced businesswoman and visits the bank in Santa Cruz once a month. It is certainly not small change she takes with her on her trips. Over the course of the last ten years the women's production has risen steadily and in many places they earn more from their small scale production than the men that work in the fields.

There is even one place where the women's earnings are so high that they have been able to employ a man to do their share of the work in the fields.

> *It was too hard, the sun was too hot and the women became ill. In the end no one was willing to cultivate the land. Now we pay the man, let him have it - I'd much sooner sit here with my tea and weave,*

says one of the women about their experiences in working on their collective land. The idea behind the collective lands was that every village should clear 2 hectares of forest and that the women should grow yucca, beans and corn on that land. Half of the crop was to be divided between the women while the other half was to be sold in the store. It soon became clear that the workload was too heavy. Today, in most places these lands are left uncultivated with the exception of La Brecha, where the women chose to employ a man.

In other places the women use their profits to invest in breeding goats or chickens. 'We make most money with the goats', a Guaraní woman tells us, 'at carnival time, the men come with their masks and steal the chickens. They are not so keen on running off with the goats'.

On the other hand, there are villages in Izozog where work has not been so fruitful; where there are women who owe money to their own stores, money which is not always easy to pay back.

Gossiping all day

It's morning. Outside the huts the women heat water for the traditional cup of *poro* (tea). Their sooty tin kettle is placed directly onto the small fire. The calabash (i.e. a small gourd made out of pumpkin) and the tin sucking pipe are heated, the old lady puts two spoonfuls of sugar and 3 spoons of mate in and lets it draw for half a minute, before handing it around. The drinking of poro, the Guaraní men will tell you, is the women's vice. They sit there slurping and gossiping all day long. But the warm tea is good for you. A freshly baked loaf is cut and we are already on our way across the three kilometres wide river bed.

It hasn't rained much, even though it's the rainy season. The Chaco river is dry and we walk over large, white sand dunes. In the little pools, fish gasp for oxygen. Felicia laughs and borrows a fishing net from one of the young boys that are on their way to go fishing. Within twenty minutes she has caught twenty big fishes and the journey continues to Iyooby village.

Outside the local store the president sits and waits. On seeing the full net, she greets us ecstatically. 'That's what I like to see. The boys have not yet arrived with the day's catch but the women's net is full. We're going to have a good meeting'.

While the fish soup is being prepared, she tells us about Iyooby's store and its problems:

> *We are not allowed to buy much at the market so right now we only sell what we grow on our lands. There are 33 members of the organisation here. Not all the women want to take part but they all pay on credit and no one will be able to pay their debt. The Chaco is dry and nothing grows.*

Cash-flow difficulties are a big problem in many of the villages. The women have no money and pay in instalments, until the choice of wares is so limited that a general meeting has to be called to find a solution.

Felicia Barrientos makes use of her presence by arranging the meeting and the women agree to pay back their debts by the end of the month. The worried president can for the time being breathe a sigh of relief. A deal is a deal. Honesty is a question of honour amongst Guaraní Indians, and they keep their word. The meeting managed to reach an agreement, a date has been set to pay their debt, and now everyone is on their way.

The stars twinkle in the sky and the Milky Way forms a large ostrich. It's the same one that catches children who are out playing too long after dark... The mothers have trouble calling their offspring in. Before doing this they invite us to dry yucca flour and cheese. We drink this down with herbal tea before driving on to the next village.

Note

[1] CIDOB - the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Oriente, Chaco and Amazonas - is a political umbrella organisation and was founded some 15 years ago. There are some 36 different ethnic groups in the lowlands of Bolivia and 29 are affiliated CIDOB. Each ethnic group has its own cultural structure, and its own political organisation. All the Guaraní, for instance, are organised in APG - The Assembly of the Guaraní People.

***Annie Oehlerich** is a Danish anthropologist currently working in Santa Cruz, Bolivia as a development worker at CIDOB.*

WOMEN SHOULD NOT ALWAYS STAY AT HOME

An interview with two Amerindian women from French Guyana

by Henriette Rasmussen

French Guyana is a so-called French Overseas Department located on the northern coast of South American between Surinam and Brazil. It covers 90,000 sq.km, and its population is estimated at 147,000 inhabitants, out of which eight per cent are Amerindians.

Interview with Mauricienne Fortino, Pahikwench People's Organisation

I had heard about the Palikur people - the French name for the Pahikwench - a community of approximately 300 people living near the Atlantic coast of French Guyana. One evening we went to their village and were surprised with a very cordial welcome by Mauricienne Fortino, a beautiful young woman, mother of four children and President of the Pahikwench People's organisation, KAMAWYENEH (The sons of the sun). KANAWYENEH is a member of the Fédération des Organisations Amérindiennes de Guyane (FOAG). We were given baskets, bowls, necklaces made of exotic beads, feathers and teeth of animals. There was a performance of their traditional songs and dances, the television was there and I was taught about the traditional dance and was interviewed about my work with the ILO (International Labour Organisation) and my Arctic background. The evening went by quickly with a huge meal composed of meat from different animals of the rainforest cooked to exotic stews with delicious spices followed by a feast where we danced in the moonlight.

It was then decided that I should come back with a slideshow about Greenland. The slideshow took place in the courtyard; we were competing with a religious gathering, with lots of psalms. Later that evening I had a talk with Mauricienne about their situation.

Apart from being the President of KAMAWYENEH, Mauricienne is also member of FOAG's executive council. The FOAG is an umbrella organisation comprising the following nations in Guyana: the Lokono, Pahikwench, Teko, Wayana, Wayapi and Kali'na. The objectives and general orientation of FOAG are:

- *To defend territorial and customary rights;*
- *To promote self-development and self-management of the Amerindian communities, promote respect for the human rights as well as the other rights and interests of its members;*
- *To secure the identity of the Amerindian communities; promote all their claims; facilitate and further their social, economic and educational development;*
- *To strengthen the unity and mutual collaboration while securing and respecting the total autonomy of its members;*
- *To establish and co-ordinate relations with the various governmental and non-governmental, national and international bodies;*
- *To facilitate exchanges with like-minded organisations in France and in the world.*

***Mauricienne Fortino (MF)*:** The Pahikwench people used to be a nomadic people and arrived here on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean from the interior, from the Amazonian region in Brazil. We have been living here for the past 30 years.

***Henriette Rasmussen (HR)*:** *How has your life changed during these last years? Is it possible to continue with your traditional culture?*

***MF*:** Yes, so far we have kept everything: our language, our traditions, our culture. But now we have the school system which interferes. We Amerindians have never known schools. We have our own culture, but the European culture is being imposed on us through the schools.

Mauricienne Fortino, President of Pahikwench People's Organisation. Photo: Henriette Rasmussen

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HR: *How do you pass on your traditional knowledge?*

***MF*:** We get a lot of help from our elders. They are teaching the young how to sing and dance, how to make bead-works. Now we know all that, and if we lack information we can get it from our people in Brazil.

***HR:** So it is a private thing to safeguard your traditions and not something that is being taken care of by the official educational system?*

***MF*:** No, nothing is being done. Our language is not taught, nothing of our culture is present at the schools: our Brazilian origin, the knowledge of our elders. No mention is made either of the fact that we are Amerindians; unlike what is the case for Chinese or Europeans or people of any other origin.

***HR:** As the president of your organisation, what are your visions for the future?*

***MF*:** My visions for my people? Well, I tell the young people to get as much school education as possible. It is good to know your own culture and your own traditions, but you must also know about your rights, know them better, in order not to be bound to the village, in order to get ahead. You should not stay in your village forever. But it is not easy to give the right education. The young people form couples very early. For instance, there are girls of 13 who become mothers - that is very young, much too young. I think it is better to finish one's studies before forming a couple. The young people should not be denied the right to do so but they should wait, because starting a family at a very young age is a problem.

***HR:** What kind of education is needed here?*

***MF*:** We have given it much thought; well, to be taught to read and write in French is very important. Here, people over 40 years old never went to school; they are illiterate. Many of them come from Brazil, and the majority do not speak French. They only speak their mother tongue. This makes all paperwork very complicated, and creates many other problems. So even basic education is needed.

HR: *Your people elected you as the president of their organisation. It is an important and big responsibility, a post of honour. Is it common among your people to elect a woman?*

MF: No, it is not common, neither among my people nor among other Amerindian peoples. The women usually do not have much to say. It is always the man who makes the decisions. But behind every man, there is always a woman to give him advice. In Amerindian culture the man is the big chief, but in reality, women are the decision-makers and the wise ones. Nowadays, it has been accepted that women can become leaders. This is a big step. In our village there are many women who stay home with their children because their husbands refuse to let them work outside the home. Some do have work, but it creates problems. It is not yet generally accepted.

HR: *What is your advice to other indigenous women?*

MF: What I want to say to other indigenous women? I will not tell the women to stay home and take care of their husband and children. They should go out and try to obtain an education and a diploma, but then go back to their village and serve their people. They should also see other things and learn from it. I take women in my community to other villages and show them what there is to see. They must get out and see for themselves.

Interview with Cecile Kourouyi, customary chief of the Amerindian people, Bellevue-Yanou, French Guyana

While I visited French Guyana, the rumour spread that I was an Inuk from Greenland. The Kali'na people were curious about my people and arranged that the slides I had brought with me were shown in Awala village - once outdoors under a traditional roof when it got dark enough, and twice in the primary school where the enthusiastic children asked many questions about what kind of animals there are in Greenland, how to make a snow hut, if we had problems, how our language sounds, etc.

One of the stops we made on the four hours drive from Cayenne to Awala was in Yanou village, where I was introduced to Cecile Kourouyi, their newly elected customary chief. The term 'customary chief' and what it implies is not accepted by the French as they see it as a possible threat to their power. So the Kali'na people are still fighting for the full recognition of their traditional leadership system.

When Cecile Kourouyi heard about the slideshow in Awala, she asked me to show the slides to her people as well. So one evening I was taken to Yanou, where many women, men and children were waiting outside Cecile's house. After it had become dark, I showed and explained the slides to much amusement for the people of Yanou. Later, with genuine Kali'na hospitality, we had a feast with many delicious dishes and exotic drinks. I stayed overnight at Cecile's house and the following day we had a long talk.

Cecile Kourouyi (CK): We have not had a customary chief since the old one died, thirteen years ago. And I was just elected last year.

Henriette Rasmussen (HR): *What are the responsibilities of a customary chief?*

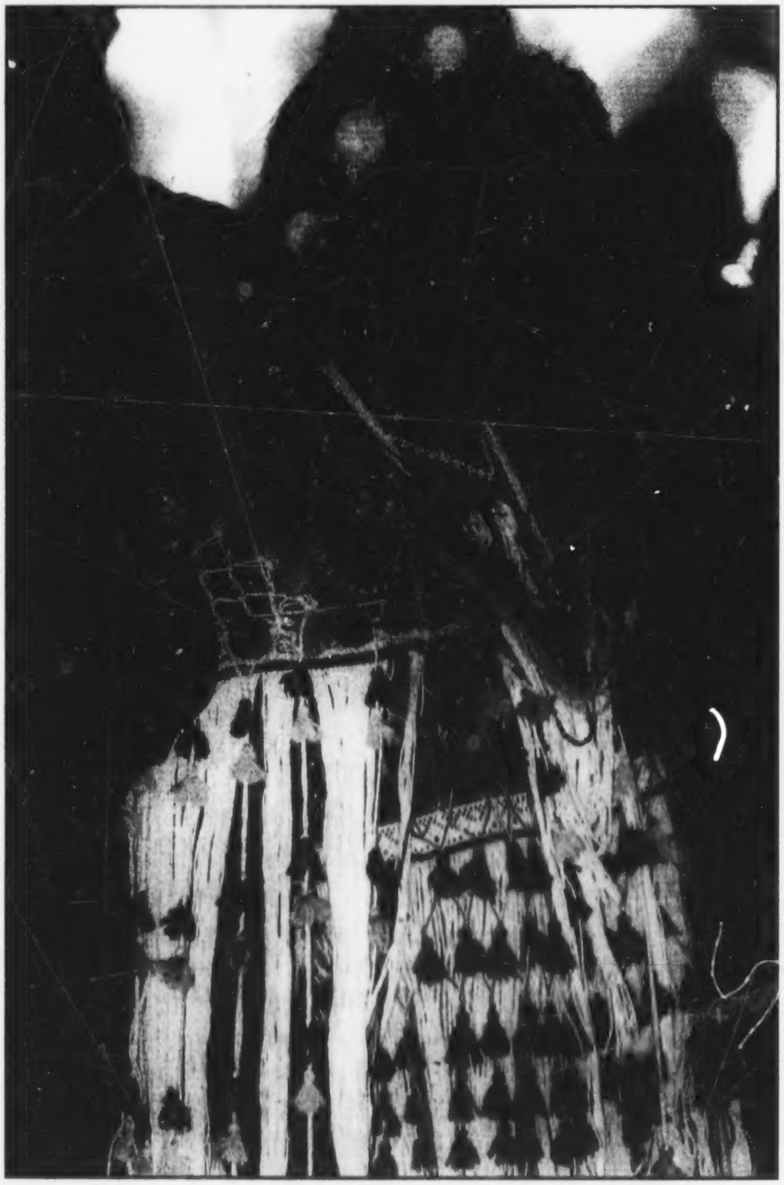
CK: That is to be an Amerindian at heart, first of all, and then next, to be it in your conscience. Then, it is very important to have a base in your culture. My parents have given me an Amerindian education. But I have also had a European education in Sinnamary with my sisters. After my education as a European I had a big desire to be myself. My traditional education provided me with a language and a cultural conscience.

HR: *Is it difficult to have these two different educations?*

CK: In order not to have a problem they should be equal, so that you do not let one dominate the other.

HR: *What is the difference between a European and an Amerindian education, and is there anything in the European education you have especially appreciated?*

CK: I appreciate everything I have learned. But I think that it is less difficult for us to obtain the European education; while, on the contrary, it is very difficult for the Europeans to learn our culture. They should be taught our culture: our way of thinking, our language, our hearts. That is not something you can buy. The European culture is taught at the schools through books. But our education is



Cecile Kourouyi, Customary Chief of Yanou.
Photo: Henriette Rasmussen

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taught at home, which gives it a special strength. There, we learn the language, the food and the traditional crafts. For example, we the women learn how to 'do' the cotton; we learn how to make the hammock; how to make our pottery; how to cultivate the land; how to grow manioc and cassava, and from the cassava how to prepare the *couac* (the flour) and the *cacheri*, our local Amerindian drink, and how to appreciate the drink. Other things we learn, is how to make the designs of the bead work for our costumes. The dances are very important too, and to know the lyrics of the songs.

Then there is all the knowledge for the men: the basketry, the archery, and the knowledge of how to make a *pirogue* (dug-out canoe). We are much closer to nature than the Europeans.

HR: *What are the meanings of the songs you sing?*

CK: The songs always mean something. They always tell a story, and I respect them a lot. Some of the songs tell about people who are dead, for instance the funeral ceremony and the *epekodonon*, a ceremony where the dead is commemorated, 2-5 years after his demise. We make a big feast to give our respect to the dead person, we dance and we cry; and some cut their hair, as a symbol of a new beginning of life.

HR: *Is it difficult to be an Amerindian in the towns where French or European culture prevail?*

CK: If you have a conflict inside you it is difficult. But if there is no conflict then it is not difficult. The colour of the skin has for me no significance. The blood inside our veins has the same colour, and when we are dead we will all be buried.

Also, for example, I wear jewellery; both traditional and also European jewellery. It is OK!

HR: *How would you like to utilise your position as a customary chief?*

CK: First of all, I would like to keep on being the one I am, Cecile Kourouyi. And very simply, I would like to have a good relationship with the others, my people, by listening to them, by discussing with them in order to work closely with them about the best things to do for all of us. For instance, how to enhance the situation for the Amerindian people so that we get the same benefits as the French or the Creole. An Amerindian should be able to become a doctor or a teacher and many other things as much as the whites and the Creoles. I have had a European education, but I know that I am an Amerindian woman.

In the towns we live like Europeans, but in the villages we live like Amerindians with few facilities. But I think that we have a right to have European goods too. Like electricity. This would give us the possibility for example of having dishwashers which makes the life for the women easier.

HR: *Will things be different now that the customary chief is a woman, than when it was a man?*

CK: Yes. It will be different. It is a difficult task for me, but I have to look forward, not look back. It is also difficult for the men to accept that their leader is a woman, so I speak a lot with the men, in order to get their trust. Because the women know me and they support me. But the first thing a woman leader needs is the support of her husband and that of her family. That is very important for a customary chief, because without her family she is alone.

HR: *What would your recommendations be for other indigenous women?*

CK: A woman should not only stay in her house. She should not always do the dishes. Or the meaning of her life should not only be that of reproduction, getting babies. She is not a subordinate to her husband. She may be a little under him, but not very much.

Also, a woman's thoughts and her feelings as a mother are very strong. She understands a lot, at the same time as she is able to accept difficult situations. She makes a less egoistic leader.

I would like to have it so that the knowledge we, women, have concerning the children and amongst ourselves were put to our common benefit. The woman is as good a thinker as the man.

Henriette Rasmussen *is an Inuk (pl. Inuit) from Greenland. A teacher by education, she is former member of the Greenland Home Rule parliament and also a former Minister of Social Affairs in the Home Rule government. She is currently working in ILO, Geneva, as Chief Technical Adviser, and visited French Guyana on an official journey in September 1997.*

TRIBAL WOMEN IN UTTAR PRADESH: CHALLENGING THE PANCHAYAT SYSTEM

An interview with newly elected Panchayat members from the Van Gujjar and the Jaunsari tribes

by Diana Vinding

Indian local government has three tiers: 'Gram Panchayat' or village council constituted by members from the village wards; 'Kshetriya Panchayat' or block council (for several villages); and 'Zilla Panchayat' or district council. All these councils are based on direct elections.

In 1992 an amendment of the 'Panchayati Raj' (local governance) law introduced a 33 per cent reservation for women and for scheduled tribes at all three tiers. Not surprisingly this initiative was met with widespread scepticism. Would women be able to shoulder the responsibility of being ward members, 'pradhans' (head of Gram Panchayat), or 'pramukhs' (head of the Kshetriya Panchayat)? Would they be able to plan and work for the upliftment of their villages?

In Uttar Pradesh in north western India the first local elections under the new system were held in December 1996. In preparation for this, an electoral training programme was offered by RLEK, an Indian NGO who has been supporting tribal peoples for several years; the objective was to make women aware of their electoral rights and the possibilities opened up by the new legislation.

The result was a high electoral participation by women and a great number of women - tribals and non-tribals - that not only contested the elections but also were elected. As was to be expected, the new female Panchayat members are facing numerous problems not only in the councils but in their families and society as well. This is especially true for many tribal women, who have to confront a double discrimination - as women and as tribals.

However, speaking to some newly elected tribal women also definitely gives the impression that they know what they want, are determined to shoulder their responsibilities and will fight for their rights as Panchayat members.

Interview with Sain Bibi, a nomadic Van Gujjar woman.

The Van Gujjar are muslim buffalo pastoralists who live half the year in the forested Shiwalik hills, south of Dehra Dun (UP), spending the other half some 300 km away up in the highlands of the Himalayas where they take their herds for summer grazing. They total approximately 5,000 families.

As nomads they have been considered until recently as 'having no permanent address'. This meant that they were not registered on the electoral lists and hence not allowed to vote. Thanks to the intervention of RLEK this is no longer the case and they have now been granted the right to vote. The first time was in December 1996.

Sain Bibi is 24 year old and lives with her family in the middle of the forest, where we meet her in front of their *dera*, the Van Gujjars traditional dwelling, a round wooden structure with a grass thatched roof.

Five years ago Sain Bibi was illiterate, today she is a ward member of her Gram Panchayat.

Sain Bibi (SB): Learning to read and write is very important. I have attended the Adult Education Programme offered by RLEK and it has made me much more secure. So after the adult education programme I decided to get trained as a para-med and para-vet so that I could help my people when they have problems with their health or their cattle. And when the elections came up and the Van Gujjar were granted the right to vote, I decided to follow the electoral training that RLEK offered us. Later, people in my ward thought that I would be a good candidate. Therefore I contested the elections. I also campaigned, visiting the various deras, talking to people and telling them that I would try to solve their problems.

Diana Vinding (DV): *Have you been able to do so?*

***SB*:** Yes. For instance, I have seen to that all the members of my community for the first time have been granted ration cards so that they can buy subsidised goods like kerosene, rice, flour, and sugar from Fair Price shops. But I had to make repeated visits to the office of the District Supply Office and have the voters list of my ward cross-checked there, and in the beginning the Fair Price shop keeper refused to sell to us.

DV:* *Have you faced any difficulties in the village council?

***SB*:** In the beginning of my term, yes. I was not being informed about the panchayat meetings, was not called in. But this has been solved thanks to the mediation of RLEK and now I am formally advised of the meetings. I don't have any problems with the other ward members. We usually try to reach 100 per cent consensus. And if I need some clarification, I can ask RLEK. The council has already effected improvements like getting electricity to the village and hand posts for drinking water. However, out of 13 ward members, I am the only Van Gujjar, so the major problem is to get the Council to discuss issues that are important to us. We live in the forest, not in the village, and there is no development programme for people in the forest.

DV:* *What issues are you thinking of?

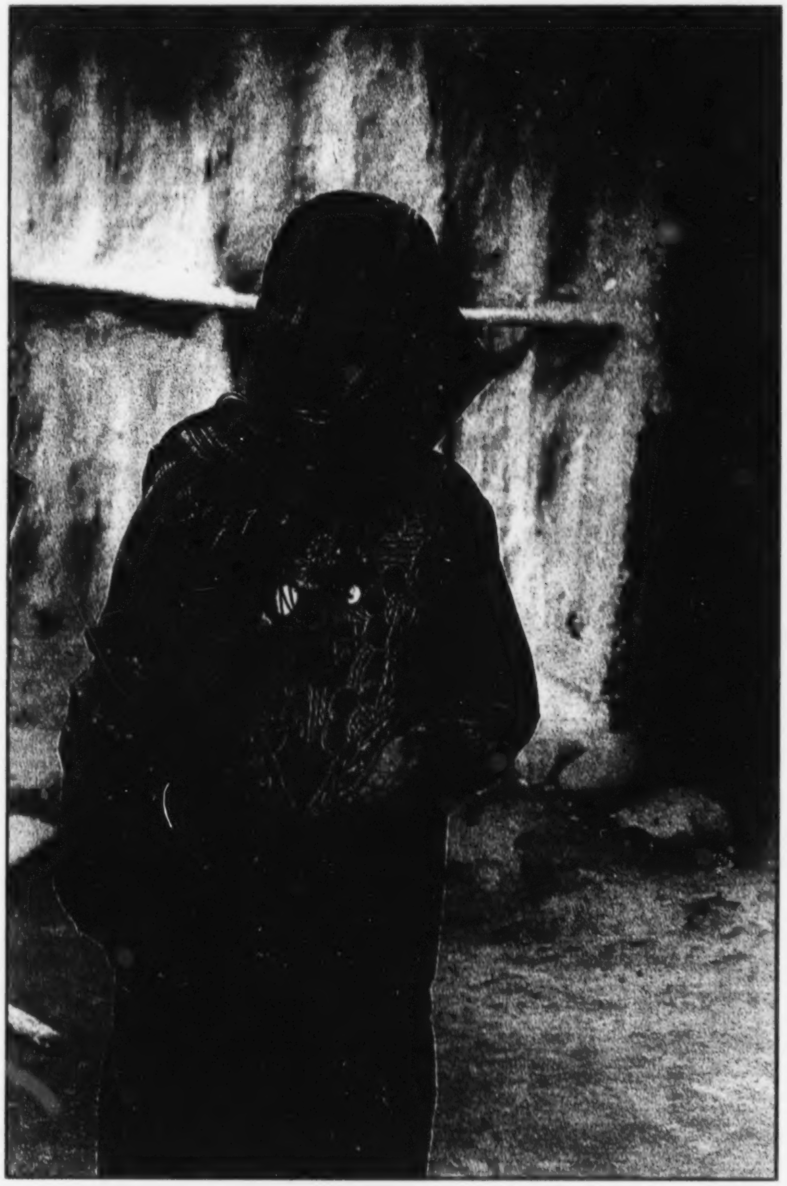
SB: Well, one problem is the water pollution. We draw water from water holes near the rivers, and the rivers are polluted. Therefore we need wells. We also need fodder for our buffalos so we want to have more fodder trees planted.

DV:* *Are you the only woman in the village council?

***SB*:** No, there are a few others. But they are shy, they cover their face and speak less than the men. I am the one that speaks most.

DV:* *How have your people reacted to your election?

***SB*:** As the only Van Gujjar in the Gram Panchayat, I am approached by many of my people when they have problems with the Forest Department. I also participate in our own traditional council and, in



Sain Bibi in front of her dera. Photo: Diana Vinding

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general my word is accepted. But yes, there has been one person who objected. He is known as the middleman for bribes from the Forest Department, and he once told me 'You are a girl, and I don't listen to girls'. But I replied: 'You have shown your leadership. Now we will rule, not you'.

DV: *What about your family?*

SB: Well, they have been a bit confused about my new role. Because now I am very busy, I have to go to meetings, I also spend a lot of time in the village so people can approach me and I can get the news. Therefore I can no longer look after the buffalos or help my family with other chores, like cooking, looking after the smaller children of the family. But I think they understand now.

Interview with a group of Jaunsari women

The Jaunsaris are a scheduled tribe living in the central Himalayas of Uttar Pradesh as sedentary agriculturalists. For centuries the weaker sections of the Jaunsaris lived as bonded slaves, and although this is no longer the case, many of them are landless labourers and very poor. The Jaunsaris are hindus, but although girls are less 'wanted' than boys, also less educated, there is no dowry problem as in other sections of Hindu society. The six women interviewed were: Gyani Devi who is the pramukh of her block, Sushila who is a pradhan, Jano Devi who is a block council member, and Devani Devi, Sammo Devi and Mimo Devi who are all ward members.

The interview took place after a meeting convened by RLEK where almost 600 newly elected female Panchayat members were able to voice and discuss their problems with a panel of government representatives. A few husbands were present during the interview.

Gyani Devi: The major problem I have encountered - and I think this is a general problem - is corruption. This is especially the case of the Development Officers (DO) who allocate funds for local development initiatives. It is very common that they deduct up to 35 per cent as a private 'commission'. But I managed after a long struggle to get rid of the DO I was dealing with.

Sammo Devi, Pingla Devi and Mimo Devi - Jaunsari ward members.
Photo: Diana Vinding

***Sushila*:** I feel helpless. If you don't pay the DO a bribe, you don't get any money and the villagers will ask what you have done for them. And if you do pay a bribe, you are blamed by the villagers and under suspicion for not bringing back all the money that had been promised. That's what happened to me. And it is a problem, for how can we develop our village, and complete the work we have promised to do if we only get part of the money?

***Devani Devi*:** We also have problems with the *patwari* (land administration officer) who sells our communal land to outsiders without informing us. This is a very serious problem we have to deal with because we as elected members are held responsible.

***DV:** How do you manage the paper work?*

***Gyani Devi*:** I don't read Hindi very well, but I am in the process of learning. Also English. My children help me. If I have to be informed about something written in Hindi, I get someone to read it for me. To avoid being cheated, I make two copies of all documents and have both of them signed by myself and by the person I am dealing with.

Sammo Devi: Most of us have no formal education because we had no primary school in our village and we were not allowed by our parents to leave the village. Only the boys could do so, so our men are more educated. Now we have schools, but the teachers we get are from the plains, they work for four days and then go off for four months holidays. We should have our own people who are literate to teach our children. This is a problem that I have raised in my Gram Panchayat.

***DV:** How do the men look at your new responsibilities?*

Mimo Devi: My husband objected because now he has more work to do when I go to meetings. But I told him: 'I have been elected. So bye bye, I am on my way...'

***One of the husbands*:** We are not in favour of this new electoral law. We don't object, but we think it is problematic. Our women are not educated, they are not used to being on their own, they lack confidence. That's why I had to accompany my wife to this meeting.

Jano Devi: I think you came along because you just wanted to have a day off. Of course we can manage, we can take the bus. We have confidence because we won the elections, and it will be even better when we can prove that we have done something.

DV: Were things better before, when men were in charge?

Another husband: Our traditional council was very strong, and its decisions were respected. Now things have changed, the mentality of the plains is taking over, there are more crimes, the new Panchayats accept bribes.

Mimo Devi: Before, our ward had a male representative, but we didn't see much of his work. As newly elected we are striving to do something, but sometimes we feel helpless. We are not being properly informed, we don't have any funds and we have to fight all kinds of corruption. We feel we have the responsibility but no power. There are many hindrances and sometimes we ask ourselves if the system is prepared to accept us?

***Diana Vinding** is an anthropologist and is working in IWGIA. She visited Dehra Dun in October 1997.*

GREENLAND'S WOMEN WANT TO TAKE THE LEAD

by Henriette Rasmussen

Despite the fact that the men are the most visible in the political arena, also in Greenland, the Inuit women are taking over political posts traditionally occupied by men. The Ombudsman is currently a woman, and three of the biggest towns in western Greenland have just elected women as mayors. Even the Bishop of Greenland is a woman. But there is still a long way to go before you can talk about equality.

Greenland is one of the greatest homelands of the indigenous peoples, the biggest island on the planet. The interior is covered by glacial ice all year around, but the coastline, scarcely populated, is comprised of many well-functioning villages and towns where Greenland's 55,000 inhabitants live. Of these 85 per cent are the Greenlandic speaking descendants of the hunting Inuit.

Modern history

The Inuit on this Arctic island were colonised by Denmark in the 18th century, but for a long period they experienced few changes in their hunting and fishing culture. The big changes occurred during the 1950s, when the industrialisation began, and the people were urbanised through the so-called 'concentration-policy'. During this period many small villages were abandoned and the people moved into bigger towns in order to create an economy based on fishing industry and export. During the 1970s the law to introduce a Home Rule was prepared by a joint commission, comprised of an equal number of Greenlandic and Danish politicians. The law states that the people of Greenland are a distinct community, nationally, culturally and geographically, who within the realm of Denmark, shall govern their own affairs by a democratically elected *Landsting* (Parliament) and an executive, the *Landsstyre* (Home Rule Government). The Landsting has legislative power on all matters except for those related to the Constitution, foreign policy, defence, the judicial system and the currency, which are still the responsibility of the realm.

The Home Rule, inaugurated in 1979, is unique as it was a result of peaceful negotiations. It gives the residents of Greenland a high degree of self-determination and is supported financially by its own taxes and economy, as well as a block-grant, negotiated every three years, from the Danish state. The rights to the sub-surface resources also have a special status, whereby it is stated in the law that the resident population has fundamental rights to the natural resources, but the decisions on exploration and exploitation of sub-surface resources are made by a joint committee with an equal number of Greenlandic and Danish members.

Greenland is divided into 18 municipalities, and five municipal elections have been held since the inauguration of the Greenland Home Rule Government, the most recent in the spring of 1997.

Women's skills for survival

The Inuit women of Greenland have a long history and culture, and their skills contributed to the sophistication of survival techniques in the Arctic. Just like the men they have had a hard life in an area on the edge of the possibilities for human survival, as hunters and users of what their environment could provide for their livelihood, always migrating after game.

During the colonial period the Greenlandic Inuit very much served the Danish colonisers as subordinate employees in the colonial administration, in the church and the school system, aside from taking care of their traditional livelihood as hunters. In the early 1920s fishing, too, became more common, and today it has developed into a commercial fishing industry with ocean-going shrimp factories, and become the main economic basis for the Greenland Home Rule Government.

Inuit women surrounding the 'white anoraks'. Photo: IWGIA archive

Young politics

Before the establishment of the Home Rule Government all politics were more or less decided in Denmark. This also includes the period from 1950 onwards where the fastest modernisation of a people took place as a result of the concentration policy whereby local hunting communities were resettled on the west coast of Greenland, concentrating their population in the so-called 'open water towns', i.e. the ice free harbours of western Greenland, in order to serve the commercial fishing industry.

Democracy has since then emerged, especially around the time when Denmark became a member of the European Union in 1972, and 'springtime' began for Greenlandic politics. A European style party system took foot and there are now five parties ranging from the right-wing Atassut - the Liberal Party (30.1 per cent of the votes in the 1995 Landsting elections); Akulliit - a small faction of the Liberal Party (6.1 per cent); Siumut - the Social Democratic Party (38.4 per cent); Non-party candidates (4.7 per cent); and Inuit Ataqatigiit - the Socialist Party (20.3 per cent)[1].

Challenges need both sexes

There has been a growing awareness among Greenland's women to take responsibilities in politics and also as public figures. While the male population was given the right to vote and to be elected already in the 1860s by the Danish colonial administration, women first gained it in 1948. In recent years women have slowly emerged in the public arena with a determination which gives hope for the future. There are other positive signs too. Figures showing young people's attendance in higher education are equally divided between young men and young women, if not slightly higher for the female part. Problems such as violence have been dealt with in grassroots organisations through self-help groups who have access to some public funding, especially for the running of shelters for battered families.

Women have also become more outspoken in the public debate, and various women's organisations have encouraged more participation in decision-making fora, stating that solving the problems of the modern society and combating the challenges of the present day need the involvement of both women and men.

Local politics

The last municipal elections, which occurred timely after 4 years in April, 1997, showed that out of 587 candidates 101 or 17.3 per cent were women. They got 23.7 per cent of the votes and 32 of them were elected as members of the 18 municipal councils. Four of them were elected as mayors of their towns including three in the biggest towns of Greenland.

The municipal councils are responsible for the administration of urban planning, rental housing, social affairs such as unemployed, elders, youth facilities, kindergartens and elementary schools, as well as residential construction and groundwork. They fix and collect taxes, and administer the big public expenses of social affairs and schools. A number of practical tasks are handled by the labour market department of the Greenland Home Rule authorities and the individual municipalities. The municipal labour market offices are in charge of job provision, job creation programmes, training programmes, information about job opportunities and registration of unemployment.

The new mayors will all be dealing with very much the same problems. Questions like creating a sound dependable economy have always been vital questions and have direct links to high unemployment rates.

The biggest constraints are very high transportation costs along with the fact that energy is based on oil-generated electricity. Tourism is regarded by all to be the new principal industry and it has good potential if you develop a 'different' tourism concept taking into account that this is one of the most unique places on the planet, where survival in the grandeur of the stunning nature and meeting and living with the friendly people in the small communities are important components. In these years everyone is keen on bringing down the air fares, especially within Greenland, in order to bring about better conditions for international tourism.

The four towns

The four towns with a woman mayor are Qeqertarsuaq, Aasiaat, Maniitsoq and Nuuk.

Qeqertarsuaq is the biggest town on the island of Disco. It is a community of a little over 1,000 people, who fish for shrimp and, especially in winter, hunt making use of the dog sledge.

Aasiaat is also situated in the Disco Bay area above the Polar Circle, which by some is called the 'real Greenland' because of the Midnight sun and its icebound winters, where the dog sledge still constitutes an important means of transportation and has also played an important role in sports in recent years. Aasiaat is one of the biggest towns in western Greenland with over 3,300 inhabitants.

Maniitsoq, which is another fishing community, is one of the west Greenlandic communities hoping to develop more tourism. It has a population of nearly 4,000 inhabitants. It is one of the so-called open water towns in south-west Greenland whose harbours are ice-free in winter and where the fishing industry was developed.

Nuuk is the capital of Greenland, led by a council with a majority of women members. It is a modern community of 14,000 inhabitants, with an up-to-date infrastructure and facilities of international standard. The main administration is situated in Nuuk. It has, however, a very traditional economy, as many still make their living as hunters and providers of the traditional food, like in any other community in modern Greenland.

Inuit women getting strong

The women among the white anoraks (the traditional male garment) are still few so there is still a long way to go. They built up the Greenlandic economy as factory workers in the fishing industry where their men were fishing, at the same time as they took care of their home and children. Now they show a will and, not surprisingly, talent to deal with the new historical development in a time full of challenges. The so far most outreaching self-governing experiences among indigenous peoples is also looked upon internationally.

The Inuit spirit world has many important female figures, and the society was not as hierarchical in comparison with many other cultures. New ways are being introduced, and the women in Greenland show a will to take their turn, both in the decision-making process and as leaders.

Note

[1] All the statistical figures have been provided by Ellen Kolby Chemnitz, Greenland's Statistical Service.

***Henriette Rasmussen** is an Inuk (pl. Inuit) from Greenland. A teacher by education, she is former member of the Greenland Home Rule parliament and also a former Minister of Social Affairs in the Home Rule government. She is currently working in ILO, Geneva, as Chief Technical Adviser.*

CHAPTER 7

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NETWORKING AND BUILDING SOLIDARITY

Article 48 of the Beijing Declaration

> *We will work towards reinforcing our own organisations, enhancing communications between us, and gain the space that is rightfully ours, as members of specific identities (nations and cultures) within the Decade of Indigenous Peoples and other institutions that represent governmental and non-governmental organisations.*

WOMEN SOLIDARITY ACROSS BORDERS

An interview with two Sámi women: Ellen Engholm from Norway, and Nina Sharskina from Russia

by Claus Oreskov

The Barents Arctic Region Council was established in 1993. It consists of the northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland, of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Oblast in Russia and the Republic of Karelia. In May 1996, it was decided to include the Nenets Autonomous Okrug (Territory) as well.

The purpose of establishing the Barents Arctic Region Council was to stimulate development and co-operation within the region at all levels of society, and, among other things, im-

prove the living conditions of the indigenous peoples in the region.

This has led to the establishment of the Committee of Indigenous Peoples of the Barents Region, with representatives from the Sámi Parliaments in the Nordic countries and from the Nenets and Kola Sámi Associations. The Committee has the mandate to make recommendations and develop an action plan for the economic and cultural development of the indigenous peoples in the region.

The Sámi are the indigenous peoples of the far north of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (Kola Peninsula). Even though Sápmi (Sámiland) is divided by the borders of four nations it stills constitutes a clear separate cultural area, where the Sámi language is the most important connecting feature. The situation for the Sámi of the Kola Peninsula is markedly different from that of their Scandinavian counterparts. As a part of the former Soviet Union, they have their own history, characterised by collectivisation and the extensive militarisation of the Kola Peninsula which took place both during and after World War II. As a consequence, they have several times faced forced relocation and today the majority of the Russian Sámi live in Lovozero.

The Nenets Autonomous Okrug is named after the Nenets people who live in tundra and taiga (boreal forest) zones across northern Russia and western Siberia. Currently the Nenets people comprise approximately 12 per cent of the population of the Okrug, or some 6,000. The Nenets are divided into two distinct cultural groups: the Forest (Khandeyar Nenets) and the Tundra Nenets.

It is only recently that the Sámi from Scandinavia and Russia have established contact with each other. During the cold war even families were divided by national borders for many years.

But today there is a Russian section of the Scandinavian Sámi women's organisation Sáráhkká in the Kola Peninsula, and the Nenets and the Sámi women from Russia and Scandinavia are cooperating around the project 'Village Development within Indigenous Societies - Network between Indigenous Peoples'.

In October 1996 the 16th Sámi Conference and the Conference of the Indigenous Peoples of the Barents Arctic Region were held together in Murmansk, Russia. During this event I had the opportunity to talk with two of the key people involved in this project - Ellen Engholm, a Sámi woman from Norway and Nina Sharskina, a Sámi woman from Russia.

Claus Oreskov (CO): *What is the idea behind your project?*

Ellen Engholm (EE): We believe that women can contribute to making a sustainable development in the northern local communities. We also think that local people have the best qualifications to adapt a strategy for their development. We can use our experiences and we believe in our own capacities and energy to improve our situation, instead of expecting someone to do it for us.

CO: *How long has the project been going on?*

***EE*:** Presently, we are in the middle of a pilot-project where we are surveying and assessing the possible activities to be undertaken by the main project, so it will offer some good opportunities for the project participants. We believe that we have succeeded in this, because of the positive reactions we have had and from what we have seen going on in the local communities that we have visited.

CO: *What kind of development are you focusing on?*

***EE*:** We work with education and training, income generating activities and cultural development. We mainly work with cultural development which is based on local knowledge and traditional activities.

CO: *Which local communities are participating in the project?*

***EE*:** At first we linked two Sámi communities in Norway together with two indigenous communities in Russia, a Sámi and a Nenets. We have just been contacted by some Swedish Sámi groups who also work in the Barents region and they also want to be linked to the project.

CO: *You talk about the development of local income generating activities. Could you define what kind of activities?*

Nina Sharskina (NS): We could start with traditional occupations like fishing and hunting, but most of the women make handicrafts like hats, shoes and clothes from reindeer skins and besides that, they make some souvenirs. We arrange courses in traditional Sámi handicrafts which can give women the possibility to earn

Sámi woman from Russia selling women's handicrafts.
Photo: Claus Oreskov

some money. There is a national Sámi cultural centre in Lovozero which works under the auspices of the local administration where women can work with traditional handicrafts. I work in a small family enterprise, where we produce handicrafts and souvenirs.

CO: *In which way can Sámi in Norway cooperate with the Sámi project in Russia?*

***EE*:** When we initiated this project we had been cooperating for a long time and we could see that the same possibilities and problems exist on both sides of the border. There are problems of accessing the right types of materials for making the handicrafts, problems of organising and similar problems in marketing and selling. I think that the women in Norway and in Russia have a lot in common and I think they can help each other to bring these traditional activities forward and at the same time strengthen their identity through these activities.

CO: *Does it work both ways?*

EE: We have had many examples during this conference where the Norwegian Sámi have been inspired by Russian Sámi ideas. The Norwegian Sámi are very enthusiastic about the way the young Russian Sámi integrate the knowledge of the elders and how they use this in the family, the kindergarten and the schools. It is not only that we bring things from Norway to Russia but also that they do things that we can learn from in Norway.

***CO:** Why have you chosen to make a women project instead of for instance a family project?*

NS: It is a typical Sámi situation that women initiate everything in the family and that is why it is a women's project.

EE: I also think it is because the women think of the whole family, of the whole community. Men's projects are more technical things while I think women are more concerned about traditional values, language and they have a strong feeling of identity which is the basis for everything else.

***EE to NS:** Do you think that what you are doing is important for women in Lovozero?*

NS: This project can really help women. The situation in Russia is quite difficult and it is the women who have to tackle all the problems. It is very difficult to earn money and to ask for credit because of the huge economic problems in Russia. Through this project the women can find their identity, their culture and remember their traditions. But I wonder - is it interesting for Scandinavian Sámi women to cooperate and communicate with Russian Sámi women because we are a bit different in our ways of thinking, in our lifestyle and we have cultural differences as well?

EE: I think it feels meaningful because Sámi women in Norway have been facing a lot of the problems you are going through now and we think that we have something to offer, we can help you to find solutions.

NS: I wonder if you perhaps are too preoccupied with the difficulties in Russia to dare to work with us? I would understand if you were.

***EE*:** I am not afraid. I feel a strength knowing that you are so strong. In the beginning of the project I did not know the Russian Sámi women but when I got to know them and their strength I knew that you would be capable of doing what you are doing now.

***NS*:** I think it is very important for you to understand our problems. In Russia it is very difficult to earn money by fishing and hunting. People do it only for subsistence reasons because they cannot use it for trading. How is fishing and hunting in Norway?

***EE*:** As it is now not many Sámi people are living from fishing and hunting alone. The traditional way of living has been reindeer herding, fishing, hunting and doing handicraft. It has been a combination of all these occupations. And it is not only reindeer herding or fishing or hunting but even small-scale farming. I think that the Norwegian society has little understanding for this way of living. As far as I can see you are also living in Russia by combining several occupations. When I visited you and your family in Lovozero I came to understand how close you are to that way of life. I think that this way of living is the future for both Sámi people in Norway and in Russia.

***NS*:** Due to the difficult economic situation we have returned to a more traditional way of living. We try to organise our lives so that we can be self sufficient. During summer we pick berries and mushrooms and late in autumn we fish and store our catch for the winter. We try to prepare everything to survive the winter because many people do not get their salary on time. Before it was only the Sámi people that lived by hunting and gathering but now because of the economic situation everybody, Russians and Ukrainians, live that way as well.

***CO*:** *Is it a question of survival?*

***EE*:** It has been mentioned many times at this conference that for the Sámi people in Russia it is a question of survival. I think that their strength is that they still have their Sámi knowledge to survive on.

***NS*:** The traditional lifestyle is taken for granted by Sámi people in Russia. We cannot live without it. Some years ago I was anxious that my son would not learn our traditions, fishing for instance, but now my son is always asking for a boat to go fishing. In every family the situation is quite the same. The children learn by imitating their parents.

CO: *Have you been to Norway?*

NS: Yes, I have been several times to the Varanger fjord where I have some friends. When I visited this family in Norway it was like I returned to my childhood because they used a Sámi dialect which we spoke when I was a child in Russia. But now the Sámi dialect in Russia is different.

CO: *Where did you get the money for the pilot-project?*

EE: The pilot project is financed by the Barents Region's Council. But how the main project is going to be financed is still a question. But the Swedish Sámi women here at the conference have taken an initiative to collect money for the Russian Sámi women to start a micro credit fund. We hope to invite Nina and some other women from the project to Norway to introduce them to working with credit funding.

NS: I look forward to a good and long-lasting cooperation in this project.

EE: And I am happy that I have had the fortune to meet you and all the other Russian Samí women.

Claus Oreskov *is a Danish anthropologist. He has been active in the IWGIA Danish National Group for many years, working especially with Sámi issues.*

FOR THE RIGHT TO A VOICE AND TO BE FREE: BUILDING OUR OWN IDENTITY

by Nellys Palomo

Within the setting of a diversity of languages, costumes and colours, indigenous women from all over the continent met for the Second Continental Meeting of Indigenous Women in Mexico between 4th and 7th December, 1997, to debate their status as women and as indigenous peoples.

Almost 100 women from 25 Indian communities and 17 countries[1] began the event with the ritual blessing. The Nahuatl grandmother spread the aroma of incense in an attempt to restore the renovating roots of vitality and timeless harmony of all those present and in so doing achieve clarity of thought that would enable them to move forward with a luminous consciousness. This would in turn make it easier for them to find the way of knowledge and confidence that these indigenous women had set out on throughout the continent.

The opening words of Blanca Chancoso, indigenous of Ecuador, set the tone that was necessary to define the limits and requirements of each participant. In Quechua she greeted those present and got proceedings underway:

> *We, indigenous women, wish to be recognised as people with rights, not only duties. We need to be seen, within our families and communities, not only as cooks and child-bearers, but as female human beings. This is what we want, not to be seen as second class people. We need our voices to be heard as the expression of one single thought and one heart in order to strengthen our position as indigenous peoples.*

At the same time she recognised that indigenous women

> *...cannot separate nor feel isolated from the situation lived by the indigenous peoples, nor can they detach themselves from their own situation as women within these peoples.*

She confirmed the need to

> *bring about changes so that our countries are recognised as multicultural societies, where each aspect of life is reasonable and fair, where biodiversity and the cultural values that apply in each of the ethnic groups, as well as the particular status of the indigenous women within these communities are respected.*

Advances through diversity

The Mexico Meeting was the second part of a process begun by the indigenous women in Quito, Ecuador, in July-August, 1995. It was here that some 200 indigenous women from all over the continent met to prepare their participation in the Fourth World Conference of Women and to study their proposals for the commencement of the Decade of the Indigenous Peoples. This activity led to the adoption of the Sun Declaration, wherein the women declared that governments and the United Nations should:

> *guarantee the full participation of indigenous women in activities led by indigenous women and representatives of our peoples, so that we might be heard and our proposals and demands, that express the deepest and most heart-felt sentiments of the indigenous women, be taken on board.*

At this Second Meeting the indigenous women recognised once again the essential role they fulfil in the reproduction and preservation of their millennium cultures and reaffirmed their

> *responsibility for reinforcing, building and strengthening our presence and participation in all areas and at all levels inside and outside of our communities.*

They continue to be fully aware of the need to defend their rights and

> *as indigenous women to take up the struggle to defend our communities and our territorial and political claims as our only form of guaranteeing our own projection, and the only form of guaranteeing our existence as a people and the aboriginal culture of this continent.*

The four days that the conference lasted imposed serious responsibilities and commitments with regard to their lives and to the fight against the events that shape their lives as indigenous peoples, 'without moving away from the course we are following as indigenous peoples'. They defined a posture that was appropriate to their growth as a movement, declaring that from that moment onwards, they needed

> *to learn how to walk on our own two feet, without any more intermediaries, in search of a new relationship with non-indigenous society and with each of the solidarity organisations that have accompanied us in these processes...*

so that they would be able to define their own 'strategy of action and of political alignment' to make the movement more able to fend for itself.

Conclusions reached

The conclusions they reached were the following:

In the face of constant aggression and violence against their demand for fundamental rights such as the right to control and exploit our natural resources, they demand that states recognise and respect the territorial and political rights of the indigenous peoples by adapting Western laws to the undeniable multicultural reality that exists in the countries of the continent.

Another proposal that was voted on and which was frequently referred to during the course of the conference, was for the cessation of all violence against the Indian peoples of Mexico and they demanded the approval of the Bill promoted by COCOPA[2] as well as the immediate demilitarisation of Chiapas and of all the indigenous regions of Mexico, and the minimal conditions necessary for the renewal of the San Andrés peace talks.

In the framework of the indigenous decade declared by the UN, they demanded to be guaranteed sufficient resources to strengthen the work of the indigenous peoples' organisations. They demanded that governments, international bodies, research institutes and transnational companies respect the knowledge and life of their peoples and expressed their opposition to neo-liberal policies that threaten their fate and the dignity of the indigenous peoples, by seeking to control this knowledge.

At the same time they demanded the training of women leaders to equip them better to deal with areas like the identity and world view of indigenous women; management, self-management and leadership; negotiation with governments; lobbying; dealing with international bodies. By the same token they will look to improve the handicraft women's abilities in administration, management, quality control and marketing.

Regarding the patenting of the human genome, it was agreed that this should be approached as a problem of politics and as a question of the defence of human rights. They urged that the subject be incorporated into the ILO Convention No.169.

At an organisational level, it was agreed that they should set up a continental network with one representative for each of the following regions: North, South, Centre. This will be for a duration of two years, with meetings to be held annually or whenever necessary. The function of this commission will be to impart information, maintain contacts with the individual countries, promote the presence of indigenous women in international bodies and to build up a structure in each country while respecting their differences and diversity. The commission was empowered to convoke the 3rd Continental Meeting in Panama in two years' time.

Our presence cannot be denied

The very diverse nature of this movement requires a broad enough perspective to be able to offer support to everyone.

At the first meeting, it was agreed that the basic characteristics that defined the women were their need for the recognition of their status as victims of oppression as women and as peoples, and a respect for

Women from Amatenango, Chiapas, demonstrating on Columbus Day, 12 October 1994. Photo: J.R. Martínez León, La Guillotina.

their lands and biodiversity. Their demands have been articulated on the basis of this definition. As women, they recognise that they have been, still are and always will be, the ones who will protect and transmit the indigenous view of the world, of science, technology, art and culture. In spite of this, they are oppressed on three counts: by being women, by being indigenous and by suffering from a precarious economic status within their communities. Despite all they have to offer, neither the Indian peoples themselves nor the non-indigenous patriarchal society takes heed of their rights as human beings to the degree that might be expected from multicultural, multilingual societies like our own.

Added to this is their need to recognise the repression and discrimination that they suffer as indigenous peoples, since they are aware that if there is no recognition of their rights as peoples, there will be no recognition of their rights as women. They call upon nation states and international bodies to recognise their historic, political, social, cultural and religious rights as indigenous peoples by way of their constitutions and their legal systems.

They know, too, that without a territory in which to develop as peoples, they will never be able, as women, to bring about harmonious sustainable development projects nor safeguard intellectual property rights of their artisans and the biological diversity of their lands.

Just as was the case in the First Meeting of Abya Ayala[3], the women confirmed their

> *...firm conviction to continue to protect, resist, and fight together with their peoples for the recognition of their rights. Until respect for the dignity of their gods and of Mother Earth are attained and regained for the benefit of their children and grandchildren, their hearts will not be glad* (Sun Declaration, Quito, Ecuador, 1995).

In the same manner at this Second Continental Meeting they reaffirmed that:

> *We are many women and men. Our presence can not be denied. We are silent but not without speech. The pipes and the drums mark our rhythms, our parties and our traditions. They are our voice and the cradle of our existence* (Declaration of Mexico Tenochtitlan, Mexico, 1997).

Notes

[1] The participants came from North America (Canada), Central America and South America.

[2] COCOPA - The Commission for Concord and Pacification - was established by the Mexican government for finding a solution to the conflict in Chiapas. It is constituted by a federal parliament member from each of the parties represented in parliament, and it is mandated to present law initiatives regarding the rights and the culture of the indigenous peoples of Mexico.

[3] Abya Ayala is the indigenous name for the Americas.

***Nellys Palomo** is a psycho-therapist and in her own words 'the mother of a wonderful son'. She is also a founding member of the organisation Kinal Antzetik which in Tzotzil language means 'The land of the Women', and works as a consultant to indigenous organisations, specialising in gender and environmental issues. She is the author of the book **Las Alzadas** (The Women Rebels), which is a compilation on the struggle of indigenous women in Chiapas and in Mexico in general.*

PACIFIC WOMEN: EXPERIENCES WITH INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

by Lynette Cruz and Ulla Hasager

The indigenous Polynesian people of Hawai`i, na kanaka maoli, today comprise only one-fifth of the 1.1 million inhabitants of their homeland, Ka Pae`ina, the Hawaiian Archipelago. Hawai`i was annexed to the United States in 1898 - one hundred years ago - and has since 1959 been the Union's fiftieth state. A little more than two hundred years ago, there were five times as many kanaka maoli and they were the only inhabitants of the islands[1].

Like many other indigenous peoples worldwide, kanaka maoli have the most bleak social conditions of all ethnic groups living in Hawai`i and they do not experience Hawai`i as the peaceful tropical Paradise and happy melting pot of the tourist propaganda. However, an indigenous movement for protection of their own lives, culture and environment through self-determination has grown strong over the last 25 years and is considered a force to be reckoned with by the state and federal governments, who consistently plan legislation to control the movement.

Pacific Women's Network was started in early 1995 by two local Hawai`i women and myself as a tool to facilitate community organizing - people coming together around specific social justice issues - and to promote educational programs around Pacific issues, primarily those that impact on women and families. Those issues include sovereignty/self-determination, prison and labor conditions, environmental racism and justice, and the serious lack of information relating to these concerns in mainstream media. It was our purpose to engage women of diverse ages and backgrounds, at all educational and economic levels, within the Pacific area and to reach past merely intellectual discussion to the *na`au* (the guts or center of human beings) to promote dialogue, and to allow individuals to connect with each other at a very basic level. We require of members of the Network that they commit to work towards 1) achieving *pono*, (right relationship with all things; a balance); 2) personal decolonization; and 3) practising respect for every person and all things. Members are expected to practise *ho`oponopono* (to heal conflict through mediation), *kuleana* (responsibility for the actions of ourselves collectively and individually), and *malama`aina* (to care for and nurture our environment). And all of this is to be done with proper protocol based on teachings of our *kupuna* (elders, ancestors, spirits). Awareness of issues, as you can see, is only one part of the work; the other part is translating that awareness into action in our daily lives.

Women's Institute

It was our desire to represent ourselves - Hawaiian and other local women - in a women's forum, the International Cross-Cultural Black Women's Summer Institute, which we hosted in Honolulu in July 1995[2]. The Women's Institute, out of the Medgar Evers College, City University of New York, is essentially a Black women's program[3]. This conference brought together Black women from the US continent, poor and oppressed women from other countries, both northern and southern, and Pacific women. The conference was the 7th international conference of the institute, with the 8th gathering to be held in Johannesburg in August, 1998.

The theme of the conference was 'Pacific Women: Culture, Identity and Self-Determination'. While the concept was both timely and necessary, it became obvious early on that Black leaders did not have any concept of Pacific issues, but rather saw women's issues here as merely an extension of their own, primarily continental, concerns. There were women from the 'northern countries' (United States, Canada, Europe) and from the 'southern countries' (South America, Africa, Asia), but this conference was their first excursion into the Pacific. The conference was held in Hawai`i (I believe because of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement here) to call attention to women's issues in the Pacific. The impact of racism, colonialism and Western lifestyle on culture, employment, housing and the environment as

Protesting attacts on Kanaka Maoli Rights and Autonomy Act Sovereing Sunday. Photo: Ed Greevy

well as social institutions (including the family, education and health) in the Pacific were outside of the purview of most discussions on the needs of women. The Women's Institute was the first opportunity in Hawai'i for women from Hawai'i and the Pacific region to share our experiences with other women of color from abroad.

We examined women's strategies for achieving a nuclear free and independent Pacific and our collective struggle against nuclear colonialism and environmental racism. A contingent of very powerful women from Aotearoa took the lead in describing their strategies for resistance against the military, big business and oppressive government. Women from Tahiti shared their sorrow and anger at families lost to atomic-testing related illnesses. Women from the Northern Marianas reported fears about contaminated water and dwindling natural resources on their islands, and the class division between the settler and indigenous populations.

Women from first-world nations - Europe and America, Canada and Japan - shared visions of equal rights and equal opportunity with indigenous women whose main concerns were basic food and water, shelter and safety. Our efforts resulted in a collaboration for women's strategies for achieving global self-determination and reparations. There were training sessions in personal decolonization, spiritual healing, media imaging, communications networking, group goal setting, and consensus and coalition building. Nearly fifty Pacific Islander women participated, with another hundred or so from Hawai'i and abroad including Native American women. A significant number of White women were present as well.

Identification

I learned many things about Black women, especially from first world countries, and how their view of women's struggles was different from that of indigenous women, especially in the Pacific region. We shared many similarities of oppression and suffering, of impact of sexism and racism. Yet the differences were conspicuous. For example, none of the Pacific women favored the use of the term 'Black Women' to describe themselves because of the inherent racist nature of the word 'black' as used by the colonizer. Women from Samoa and Fiji, in particular, objected to the term. They preferred 'women of color', because (this is my own assessment) in Fiji (as in Hawai'i) colonialism has impacted us so that there are color gradations within the ethnic community, and a stigma has come to be attached to being darker, or black. Pacific women believed that we should not support further divisiveness by calling attention to this created hierarchy among people of color by designating all women of color Black women (in a sense giving credibility to only black and white as defining us as people and placing the power of definition in the hands of the colonizer). Such a designation would lump together indigenous women whose issues were basic issues of human rights with first world women whose concerns were more in the nature of civil rights. The international office regarded 'black' as a strong statement of solidarity among all women of color. To them, a Black woman was really anyone who was not a White woman.

Differences in class and culture

There was an evident bias in the set up and the program which appeared to be structured for Western Black women. It does not make sense to give voice to indigenous Pacific women (especially non-English speakers), if what they say is regarded as less relevant or important. Translations were made into European languages only - German, French, Portuguese, Spanish. Accommodations for translation facilities for non-European language speaking Pacific women were not available.

Women from India's Untouchable Caste were provided funds to attend the conference. For the first time I heard a critical view of Gandhi. These women noted that Gandhi's effort to change the oppression of India's people through non-violent action had not changed their lives at all. Because Gandhi was not from a poor caste, and so could not relate to the concerns which these women, on a daily basis, struggled through. For the three hundred millions who continue to starve to death, nothing changed. Our sisters from India, untouchable young women with children and families, shared tears of frustration and fear with our Pacific *wahine* (women) who empathized with the real-life struggle of starving women and children.

The Women's Institute, while doing the tremendous service of bringing together diverse women of color, nevertheless fell short in providing for those women of low or non-existent income. At the conference, wealthier women from Europe and the Americas ate in restaurants every day, throughout Waikiki. They went shopping. They were on vacation. Indigenous women frequented cheaper restaurants, went grocery shopping and cooked in their hotel rooms, or did not eat at all.

For the Pacific hosts it was a cultural shock. It never occurred to us that food would not be provided for all. The issue of food (especially food in abundant supply) is culturally important. The local hosts secured money and purchased groceries which were kept in the reception room where all women could come for meals at any time of the day throughout their stay.

Owning suffering

'We have suffered for - what, four hundred years? And you women, you have this land and you have your culture, I mean, what is the problem?' This was a question asked of a kanaka maoli woman by a Black woman. The response: 'Are you looking for degrees of exploitation? Are you saying to us that because you have suffered longer that we have not suffered or that we have suffered less?' It was an ownership thing - who was the more oppressed? The Pacific women noticed such instances happening often, and towards the end of the conference it got a little tense...

The more mainstream, middle class Black women were called on their colonizing behavior by the Pacific women. It was an excellent opportunity to truly engage in struggle and to find allies within the community of women. One of the outspoken Hawaiian women, who has analyzed racism and colonial behavior and teaches at the University of Hawai`i, told them, basically, that they had to knock it off, that they were oppressive to the rest of us, and that as long as they lived in America and did not support, for example, the Pacific struggle against nuclear testing, they were as bad as the people testing. She told them that they had inadvertently put on a White face in their dealings with Pacific peoples and that none of us here would put up with it.

Even among Pacific women there was a kind of elitism. Some of the Samoan women, for example, looked down on kanaka maoli - without taking into account the impact of colonialism - because kanaka maoli lost our language (even though it is being recovered). One of the women from Western Samoa commented, 'Well, we know that we are cousins, but too bad about the Hawaiians, they have lost way more than they can ever recover because they live within the boundary of the US'. They felt sorry for us. They themselves had been able to continue both their land management practices and their language. And since we had no choice in the matter, it was hard to defend our position. We felt that we were being hit twice, from those outside of the Pacific experience, and those from within who behaved, ultimately, in an equally oppressive way. Luckily, throughout the Pacific, other islanders still have a choice and specific examples of outcomes to avoid. Even though these women, in some instances, were not totally supportive of us, they did come out fully in support of self-determination and independence for Hawai`i and all nations in the Pacific.

Cultural understanding

As Hawaiian hosts we intended to give our international guests an idea of what our culture is like and why we value it. In order to facilitate ways by which they could better understand us as kanaka maoli women, we tried to expose them to what we considered to be important cultural experiences.

We took them up to Mount Ka`ala to work in the *lo`i* (taro fields) which is always a trip for women who are overdressed. When they came back an hour and a half later we greeted them at Poka`i Bay with swimming opportunities, a potluck dinner and ceremony at a sacred site. Two huge torches stood on each side of the *heiau* (stone temple) where a *ho`okupu* (ceremonial gift) was offered and a *hula halau* (hula school) performed an ancient chant and dance. Our guests were treated to a once-in-a-lifetime experience, as was I! The ceremony was performed at dusk, and it was beautiful and magical beyond words. Some of the ladies started taking pictures but were scolded by elders who reminded them that, 'It is disrespectful. This is a sacred site. And actually this is not for your benefit. It is just something that we need to do. You are privileged to be in attendance'. It was a magnificent and unique experience for all of us.

Another highlight

Three Black women from Germany attended. They spoke no English. Their fathers were Black; their mothers were White; they were daughters of American soldiers. Now in their mid-thirties and forties, they spoke of being Black women in Europe. Given an opportunity to share their experiences, and how they were impacted by racism, they cried and cried. In the small groups there were no translating facilities, so the one woman in their party who spoke English told their story to the other women, and as she translated, she cried as well. It was emotional, and very freeing. One woman explained how her mother refused to take her when she was born, because she was darker. She was very fair, but her hair was in tight curls, and her mother knew that everyone could tell that her father was Black. She was taken from the hospital and put into a convent where she grew up. She is now a nurse and works at a hospital. I was glad that the women felt safe enough to share at that level, something that likely would not have happened if they perceived the environment to be hostile. The dialogue was freeing for everybody.

What happened throughout the conference was an attempt on our part to build a bridge to people who seemed to have come expecting something else. Despite the fact that there was tension and sometimes even hostility, I think we were successful. A few weeks after the conference, I received a letter from the international coordinator who shared that it was the best conference they had had thus far, and that they came away learning something about themselves as Black women. I liked that.

Human rights and civil rights

I think it is hard for Black women in America to relate to human rights. I think their concerns are more about women's rights and the civil rights issue. Human rights is an indigenous issue - about life and death, torture and imprisonment, starvation, cultural genocide, and every kind of oppression imaginable. Civil rights concerns appear to be issues of the privileged, those who already have basic needs taken care of, but want the same rights as everyone else has under the law. The issue of human rights goes beyond law - it is about having enough to eat, a non-contaminated environment to live in, and safety in work and health where there are no laws to protect you. Pacific women are forced to defend ourselves against things like nuclear testing so we look at self-determination and independence as ways to leverage ourselves, our environment and our future generations out of the oppression of colonial powers like the US. American Black women lacked our experience, although their ancestors had many equally bad if not worse experiences of their own. They themselves have fought hard to win rights within the system, and although recognizing its oppressiveness, they generally believe that we should do the same. It was sometimes difficult to explain the difference to them, and after a while we stopped trying.

Beyond the Women's Institute: Expressing culture through electronic media

After the Institute, and the tremendous networking opportunities offered by the conference, Pacific Women's Network became interested in electronic media as a means to pass information quickly to those engaged in struggle elsewhere.

One way to support the sovereignty movement in Hawai'i is, obviously, to build allies here and abroad. The idea of finding and nurturing allies for the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, as far as I knew, had not been implemented on-line. If our oppression is the same oppression (and from the same source) that other indigenous and/or poor people have been subjected to, we have natural allies in struggle worldwide and all we need to do is to link up. We fight against oppression at home and lend support where we can to others wherever they are. There is obviously much to be learned from others' attempts to throw off the 'yoke of oppression' and the more help we get, the better.

In early 1997 a friend from Belau and I, encouraged by non-kanaka maoli supporters, started an e-mail list through the University of Hawai`i to encourage discussion about the history of this *a`ina* (land), a history not merely chronological or event-oriented, but a history of experience, shared stories, protocol and culturally appropriate behavior. If it is possible to express one's culture through electronic media, this is definitely the place for it to happen. In the past year the list has grown to be a valuable resource by encouraging sharing by kanaka maoli and non-kanaka maoli on issues of concern. The list has helped our allies to grow and to provide continued support for our cultural and economic freedom. Despite early attempts by *haole* (White/Western) people to dominate the discussion and to draw sympathy for their experiences of discrimination here in Hawai`i, subscribers to the list, on the whole, have helped each other to understand what the colonizing process is about and how to behave appropriately. We don't tolerate whining, meanness or insensitive and disrespectful approaches. We also have a resident *kupuna* (elder) on-line who corrects disrespectful postings to the list. 'Uncle' feels free to scold if he thinks that someone is being hurtful. I suppose this could be seen as a kind of on-line Hawaiian cultural exchange, as people are taught to maintain themselves through such cultural reprimands (which are gentle, yet firm).

Lessons learned

The Pacific Women's Network has come a long way in the last three years. We see changes happening so quickly and so often that we know our small part in advancing social change and the Pacific women's movement is making a difference. We also know that the *pono* or balanced aspect that keeps us culturally in line guides us as we try to draw together women of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds here in Hawai`i. We are reminded that the coming together of us as women is a practice session for the coming together of all peoples. As we work through the struggles, within and outside of our groups, we learn that the hurts we have experienced are by no means specific to us as individuals or as a collective, but that our pain is the pain of our Mother Earth and all things on it ... a preparation for the birth of something better.

Notes

[1] In Hawaiian ortography vocals like A, I and U are sometimes writen with a dash. 'A' with a dash may also indicate a plural form, e.g. *kanaka maoli* would in plural be written with a dash on the first 'A' in *kanaka*. Unfortunately, we have for technical reasons been unable to reproduce this ortography.

[2] The Hawai`i host coordinators also included women from Hawai`i Prisoner Advocacy, Indigenous Peoples Literary Network, Wahine Noa, He Ala Kulaiwi, American Friends Service Committee, Hui Na`auao and Center for Native Life-systems; in cooperation with the International Women's Energy Action Network from Samoa, Fiji Women's Rights Movement, and Palau Resource Center. International Coordinator was Andrée Nicola McLaughlin from Medgar Evers College, CUNY, New York.

[3] The Women's Institute is the educational and organizing arm of a global network of women and organizations, representing Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Pacific. The Institute has been working for human rights, peace and sustainable development since 1987 and is committed to women's 'leadership development and organizational capacity building', according to their information flyer.

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CHAPTER 8

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EPILOGUE

WOMEN, GENDER STUDIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT

by Inger Sjørslev

The understanding and handling of gender issues and indigenous peoples' issues in the present world of economic and cultural globalisation is a complex affair. This is clearly stated by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz in her analysis of the effects of economic globalisation, and it is revealed and underscored in different ways in all the contributions to this document. The women, who have here told their stories, analysed their situation, and shared their concerns, express situations, life conditions and histories that are quite different, and they represent a variety of causes and effects, details and dimensions. A variety of aspects, of which not even the most skilled and knowledgeable person - woman or man, indigenous or non-indigenous - has a complete overview, and too numerous to be dealt with extensively in the present volume of indigenous women's voices.

Any attempt to deal with the issue of indigenous women on a global scale will thus inevitably involve a certain degree of generalisation and simplification.

The present volume of voices as a whole, represents a wide breadth of issues, and together these women's voices comprise one of the very few overviews of the situation of indigenous women in the present world. This may seem surprising, since much creative ink has been employed in analysing current and contemporary women and gender issues.

Furthermore, the international indigenous movement has gained increasing strength within the last few decades, and it is continuously growing, with a noticeable increase in indigenous organisations and involvement in international political work. This is accompanied by a remarkably heightened and intensified communication between indigenous individuals, groups and organisations world wide, supported by the - in this context beneficial - effects of globalisation, in areas of communication and new technology. Indigenous peoples are making their voices heard nationally and internationally, to an extent hardly dreamt of, when the first Native Americans approached the international community in the 70s.

Women take part in this movement, and represent themselves and their communities on the international scene with impressive force and increasing skills. In spite of this, there is no denying that politics, including indigenous and international politics, is still predominantly a male business.

In the same vein, it can be claimed that women and gender studies, in spite of occasional outbursts of global solidarity, are predominantly a Western business. A glance at some of the recent literature within women and gender studies reveals a fertile field, interesting thoughts, and different forms of analysis on gender issues, for the main part, however, in the context of the concerns of women in the economically and politically dominant part of the world. When the concerns of women in the developing world are dealt with, it is for the most part without consideration to the specific situation of indigenous women.

Women of the developing world enter the international scene

The modern feminist movement began a few decades back, in the 70s, the first highlight being the international women's conference in Mexico in 1975. This was the United Nations' International Year of the Women, and it was followed by a Decade, just as in 1993, the United Nations' Year of the Indigenous Peoples was followed by a Decade. At that time, in the 70s, the international community began to realise both the specific problems of the world's women, and the contribution they make to economic and productive processes, particularly in the developing world. A contribution which had been overlooked, and which had been neglected in many developing projects, with the result that these had not had the expected effects.

The Danish economist Esther Boserup drew attention to the role of women in farming in Africa, and her work became highly influential in the critical reevaluation of women's roles in production, and in revealing the wrong stereotypes of women's confinement to the 'domestic domain' (Boserup 1970). Although her work was criticised for being too simplistic (Guyer 1991), it continued to have an influence and a positive effect on the discussions of women's role in development for the whole decade.

The indigenous women and men had not yet stepped visibly onto the international scene, which, however, did not mean that there was no attention to indigenous women in the context of the rapidly increasing interest in gender studies, within the world of historians, social scientists and mainly anthropologists. However, their works did not deal with the women and men of their concern as *indigenous*.

Feminism, anthropology and gender studies

When women studies in the West began some twenty-five years ago, it was with the clear objective of exposing sexism, and of struggling for greater equality between men and women. When women in the Western academic institutions, and in development work, began to turn their interest toward non-Western societies and cultures, in order to reveal subordination of women, to look for alternative gender relations, and to search for empirical material to reach conclusions about the universality of gender roles, they also discovered that women in non-Western societies had not been passive subjects to male dominance, colonialism, or world history in general (di Leonardo 1991). Much valuable information about the role of women in reproduction and production was brought forward by feminist oriented researchers who did field work in non-Western cultures, and through looking at earlier collected anthropological material with new gender-conscious eyes.

A lot of the material that provided the stuff of theorising in those days was material collected in societies and cultures that would today be called indigenous, although most of them did not self-identify as such at the time, and although the women, and a few men, who studied them, did not see them in the context of indigenousness.

At the time of the beginning of women studies in anthropology, Western anthropology still had a strong evolutionary orientation. The evolutionary theories of the 19th century had been recognised as the accompaniment of colonialism and imperialism, and had thus been left behind. Even so, the influence from earlier theoretical attitudes was still felt in many areas of the social science profession, not to mention in the political climate of many Western 'developed' countries, which looked upon the 'rest' as ranking further down the development ladder - as revealed in the very conceptions used.

Such attitudes also affected women studies, and some of the questions asked were whether women had once back in the prehistory of humankind been in power; whether matriarchies had existed; and if the derogation of women's status was a consequence of evolution, the crucial change being the Neolithic revolution. This was the contention of Friedrich Engels, who was rediscovered as the analyst of the 'world-historic defeat of the female sex' and its alleged coinciding with the rise of private property and the state (Engels 1972). Engels' theory was creatively and provokingly put upside down by Aaby and Christensen, who maintained that the control of women's reproductive powers in the form of marriage exchange was a precondition for the Neolithic revolution (Aaby and Christensen 1977).

Other questions asked were whether women were nowadays less exploited sexually than previously in history, and underlying all these more or less explicitly evolutionary approaches was the idea that contemporary so-called primitive societies represented earlier stages in the development of humankind. The studies of many of the societies, which later began to call themselves indigenous, thus had the implicit objective of seeing the development of humankind through the social and cultural institutions of these societies.

Anthropology looked for human universals in relationships between men and women, using terms like public and domestic domains (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1972); women's reproductive capacities; and the political economy of sex and gender (Rubin 1972). At the same time, there was an eager search for alternatives to the Western gender relations in the cross-cultural variations, in order to 'determine the Archimedean standpoint from which we could move the male-dominated globe' (di Leonardo 1991). Some Native American populations seemed to be characterised historically by relatively high female status, and South American Indian myths of matriarchy were analysed as legitimations of male superiority (Bamberger 1974; Murphy and Murphy 1985).

Different theories were in circulation, and the - feminist, political - objective of struggling to achieve greater gender equality in that part of the world from which the absolute majority of researchers came, influenced most of the theories, in more or less indirect ways.

When looking at the female and male 'others' of the time, one argument was the 'native woman better off' argument (di Leonardo

1991:11). According to this, women actually enjoyed higher status in those technologically simple societies that had the attention of the anthropologists. Other theories of the more universalising kind analysed the symbolic systems surrounding concepts of male and female, as expressed in the influential thesis by Ortner (1972) that 'women are to men as nature is to culture'.

The view of (indigenous) woman as closer to nature, is a stereotype, but it is also an idea which may contain some truth in the sense of being part of the self-image of many indigenous women. It has nowadays acquired a new meaning, as when indigenous women leaders make references to Mother Earth, and emphasise the fact that women carry the main responsibility for the procreation and care of the next generation, and thus are particularly concerned about the destructive attacks on nature in indigenous areas. The fundamental fact of life that women bear children is sometimes used in the argumentation by female indigenous leaders, who appeal to the responsibility and attention of the world community in connection with revelations of the detrimental effects of pollution, chemical waste and military activity on indigenous peoples' lands.

Anthropological descriptions of women in the contact zone

In retrospect, many of the thoughts and theories that were put forward at the time, clearly bear the mark of the structural orientation of the researchers, in spite of their openness towards alternative ways of life. The distinction between public and private, between the domestic and the political sphere went through much of feminist anthropological theory in the 70s, just as a distinction was made between productive and reproductive spheres (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1972). Only later was it clearly realized how '...we in the West falsely universalize our related set of dichotomies, thought/emotion and male/female' (di Leonardo 1991:19).

It became evident that a closer and less Western-influenced look at the societies in consideration, not to mention descriptions and interpretations by women of these societies themselves, were necessary. This was also, as it continues to be, the objective of a number of anthropologists - female and male - who rejected grand theorising and cross cultural comparison, and instead aimed at getting 'inside the minds of their female informants'(op.cit.). One well known and popular example of an indigenous female insiders' account is the story of Nisa, a !Kung woman from southern Africa, as told to the anthropologist Marjorie Shostack (1981).

The beginning of the feminist interest in anthropology was, however, still dominated by an interest in dominance and power, whether male towards female, majorities against minorities, or dominating societies against dominated. In recent years, this interest has to a large extent been substituted by a much less political interest in 'culture', and this is where contemporary feminist anthropology, as anthropology in general, seems to diverge somewhat from the basic interests of indigenous women. For the main part of the world's indigenous women, issues like state violence, international economic pressure, world trade rules and regulations, the issue of intellectual property rights, land rights and freedom from encroachment and pollution, are the issues of concern. The much more theoretical, and somewhat abstract, issues of the use and application of the concept of culture, and of a lot of modern Western feminism, seem to have little relevance for the majority of those women who identify themselves as indigenous.

Still, the anthropology of women and gender relations has come up with more than a few examples of the situation of women in those societies that now identify themselves as indigenous. Examples, which through thorough analysis and revealing details, demonstrate how women's lives were affected by what went on in the situation of contact with colonial forces. Such types of analysis are of great relevance to the understanding of indigenous women's situation in the present time as well as in a historical perspective.

The women of the Trobriand Islands

Some of these studies clearly refute earlier understandings of women's roles in these societies - understandings which had been based on accounts by missionaries or male anthropologists, whose attitudes, although expressly different, went hand in hand with an imperialistic attitude. It may not be just to count the famous father of the anthropological fieldwork method, Bronislaw Malinowski, as an example of this. However, his findings concerning the role of women in the society he studied, the Trobriands of Melanesia, have since been prolifically counterbalanced by a woman anthropologist, Annette B. Weiner, who found that the role of the women was far more crucial to the whole social system than Malinowski had realized in his time, around the 1920s[1]. In other ways, she found that his description fitted neatly, and that very little in the society had changed (Malinowski 1922; Weiner 1980).

Weiner worked with the Trobriand women in the 70s, and she reveals through her analysis how the *sagali*, the mortuary distribution of bundles of banana leaves and skirts, organised, produced and controlled by women, provides the basis for the strength and resiliency of Kiriwina traditions. Changes in this system would call forth severe changes in the roles of both women and men. It would make women economically disadvantaged, and Kiriwina men would lose their base of political power.

Malinowski and other (male) anthropologists had ignored the role of women's wealth in the distribution system and they had thus failed to see how 'women and their wealth play an important role in stability and change' (op.cit.:275). When new sources of wealth for the men were introduced, this gradually inflated the specific economic value of the bundles of banana leaves which are women's property. On the other hand, women's wealth absorbed the influx of Western cash and goods,

> *...but in the inflation of women's wealth we find embedded a process which has allowed greater egalitarian control over indigenous resources, and has lessened the socioeconomic distance between old and young men and women. All of these changes occurred without causing a major break in traditional ways* (op.cit.:284).

Weiner then comes to the conclusion that women's wealth must be given a primary place in an evaluation of how the people of the Trobriands reject outside influence and maintain the strength of their tradition.

> *Thus the economic aspect of women's wealth must be examined as it reflects the ideological aspects of the regeneration of 'dala', circumscribed through the culturally defined processes of human reproduction*[2] (ibid.).

Aboriginal women of the Cox Peninsula

Other examples of processes that take place in the contact zone between the indigenous communities and the colonisers, and of how these affect women, are recorded from the Australian aboriginal women (Povinelli 1991; Bell 1980).

Belyuen is an aboriginal community on the Coz Peninsula in Northern Territory. When the anthropologist Elizabeth A. Povinelli worked in this community in the late 80s, it was in the middle of a land claim process, a process 'of uneasy articulation between an aboriginal practice of "land tenure" and an Anglo-Australian legal system for aboriginal land grants ...' and a process which repositioned women's role and status (Povinelli 1991:237).

The questions asked by both the anthropologist and the officials were: how had food gathering affected and been affected by colonialism, how had capital penetration altered the economic and social relations between junior and senior women, and what effect had these new economic conditions had on Belyun women's agency? As one answer to this complex question, the researcher found that it seemed that women at Belyuen use a blend of indigenous and colonial ideologies to organise, manipulate and reconstitute European market structures (op.cit.:236). Economic relations between senior and junior Belyuen women are established in the emergent market system, and the role of speech acts and rhetorical frames appeared to be of great importance in this economic and social activity. She thus concluded that:

> *It is in the middle ground between activity and understanding that Belyuen women use speech to gain authority in their lives, and it is to this middle ground that we should focus our attention if we are to understand how women work to maintain or to change their social conditions* (Povinelli 1991:249).

This is only one more of a number of examples that show how indigenous women are active agents in their lives. Any image of women in so-called traditional societies as either passive victims of oppression from men in their own societies, or from the forces of colonisation, is simplistic and contrary to the facts revealed by examples such as the above. Empirical examples show how the changes brought about by colonisation and the penetration of capitalism and modernity have put new strains on women's lives, but they also show how such changes have been either absorbed or turned into something that would allow the traditional social structure to continue; or even in other cases have opened up new possibilities in women's lives.

Other examples of this could no doubt be found in other parts of the world. A further investigation of how women actively use new instruments that have come to their disposition through contacts with national and international society, like international human rights instruments, would also be highly relevant. Such an investigation would probably reveal how women in some cases are able to use outside contacts and influences to improve their situation locally (cf. Jensen and Poulsen 1992).

What does postmodern feminism and anthropology have to contribute to an understanding of indigenous women's situation?

In contemporary modern and postmodern feminist anthropology, preoccupation has been more with questions of general theoretical relevance, as with deconstruction and the hegemonic status of the anthropological profession itself. All in ways which have in some senses provided a constructive self-criticism to the profession. In other senses it has, however, prevented the taking of a political, not to mention activist, stance; and it has diverted the attention away from power structures, social injustices, inequalities and oppressions that go on in that part of the world which forms the object of study.

It might perhaps have been expected that the postmodern stance with its self criticism and rejection of all accepted - including scientific - truths of Western hegemony had led to a heightened awareness of alternative 'truths', sciences, knowledge systems etc. such as the indigenous. This, however, does not seem to have been the case to any large extent. A turn has rather been taken away from political institutions, economic forces and global interest, and towards aesthetics, cultural flows, media etc. in the landscape of cultural globalisation.

When contemporary anthropologists speak of globalisation, they do not, as a rule, hint primarily at the economic forces that rule the world, in the form of capitalism, liberalism and free trade. They see globalisation in cultural terms, and discuss and analyse the relationships between the global and the local - customs, traditions, norms and institutions, and thus understand globalisation as the increased interaction and mixture of cultures - for better and for worse (cf. Hannerz 1992).

The indigenous struggle, with its hard core political and economic aspects, its defense of resources and basic human rights, - all this may seem to take place on another intellectual and political planet. In the same vein, feminism - whether in the context of anthropology and other social sciences or in general - is a department apart from indigenous women's concerns.

There is, however, no doubt that useful insights could be gained on both sides, by social scientists and feminists listening more attentively to the voices of the women 'out there' in the world, indigenous and non-indigenous, and learning from their wisdom, knowledge and experiences. On the other hand, the indigenous women's movement might also gain insights and new arguments in their struggle from a closer acquaintance with the research and experiences gathered through several decades of attention to cross-cultural comparisons, generalisations about male-female relationships and gender roles, and particularly, from the thorough analysis of the processes that have taken, and are taking place in colonisation, decolonisation and economic globalisation.

A closer interaction between, on the one hand indigenous women, with their knowledge and community experiences, and on the other, the analyses, debates and interpretations going on among anthropologists and feminists, could no doubt provide a contribution to the kind of understanding aimed for, and thus a more solid platform for action.

When dealing with indigenous women in the present context, the question whether feminist theory has anything to contribute to an understanding of indigenous women's situation in the modern, postcolonial world, however, still remains to be answered.

Much of the current discourse in feminism is on difference, and some feminist writing deals with difference in a quite abstract manner. Although feminism recognises differences in (feminist) politics, the underlying premise is that there is an actual or potential identity between women (Moore 1988). A good part of the discussions that go on in feminist circles concerning difference and identity will no doubt seem far away from the concrete, day-to-day lives of most indigenous women. Issues like the role of the state, hard core economic conditions, and relations of power and dominance are much closer to indigenous women's concerns.

Modern feminist anthropologists do, however, also deal with issues like women and the state (Moore 1988), and some feminist analysts are clearly attentive to the questions of power and inequality, no matter in which form, and whether between men and women or between different cultural or social groups:

> *While the appeal to a common female identity is increasingly untenable within feminists, the turn toward a politics of diversity is an inadequate alternative if it ignores systematic inequalities among women in access to power, knowledge, and material resources* (Frelski 1997:11).

Inequalities are fundamentally connected to the structural insurmountability of white, Western hegemony, which has been characterised as

> *the systemic consequence of a global historical development over the last 500 years - the expansion of European capitalist modernity throughout the world, resulting in the subsumption of all 'other' peoples to its economic, political and ideological logic and mode of operation* (Ang, quoted in Frelski 1997:11)

Other trends in Western feminism are thus being challenged by such notions of global power structures and attentions to the hegemony that shapes not only the legitimisation of exploitation of indigenous societies and cultures, but also the very form and practice of the sciences that deal with the global social and cultural forces.

The International Indigenous Movement

As could be expected, total agreement does not exist, neither within the Western women's movement, nor among women and men of the indigenous world. Despite having a lot in common as indigenous, like the markings of a fate, the experiences of colonialism, the attachment to land and territories, and the experience and knowledge of responsibility for future generations, indigenous women's present and historical situation differs enormously, as is also revealed by the contributions to this document. It is no wonder, then, that discussions go on and disagreements are

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found, also concerning the strategies for struggling for rights and combating wrongs.

As Victoria Tauli-Corpuz says in her contribution, feminists are divided on how to handle the issue of globalisation. Some want to deal with the effects of globalisation as something inevitable and think out strategies for integrating women's perspectives into the globalisation agenda. Others want to challenge the whole globalisation project, which they see as anti-woman and anti-poor.

This is an inevitable situation. Given the divergence of problems and conditions, one common stand on strategy, and a common attitude to all details of the struggle, are hard to expect. On the other hand, women in the indigenous movement no doubt agree on certain fundamental things.

While the rest of the world - certainly a good part of the Western world - has become somewhat disenchanted with politics in the decades since the 70s, and is by far not as active in political solidarity work and the kind of struggle that previously created social movements, the indigenous peoples have organised to an increasing extent and in impressive ways within the last decade. At the same time that radical women and a few men of the Western world began to look towards the small scale societies in the developing world to find alternatives or universals, the awareness about their status and situation in the post-colonial world was growing rapidly in many of these societies. Already in the 60s the number of indigenous organisations had grown substantively in Canada, the United States, Australia and Scandinavia, and in the 70s the indigenous movement spread throughout Central and South America. In 1977 the first NGO conference took place in Geneva, and this effectively established the indigenous movement as an international body (Gray 1997). This movement is today challenging nation states and the whole international community in constructive ways and with the purpose of gaining the obvious right of self determination for those societies whose interests and specific cultural characteristics have so far been overlooked in the decolonisation process.

Yet, from a pessimistic point of view, it can be maintained that indigenous peoples in the world of today are caught in something of a vicious circle. Social inequality leads to political exclusion, and the other way around. Being socially, economically and politically marginalised and victims of social inequality, indigenous peoples are at the same time disqualified from the political process. Marginalisation in one sphere creates marginalisation in others, and there is no space from which to take up the struggle.

In spite of a certain truth to this, a large number of indigenous peoples have managed to organise and create a platform for themselves from which to combat inequalities and the detrimental effects of globalisation. This goes for men as well as women. Indigenous women are highly conscious of their situation, in terms of their position in the global system, and much of indigenous women's activity has revealed a consciousness of the fact that a solution to some basic problems in indigenous peoples' lives is a precondition for and sometimes a solution in itself to the specific problems of women.

The UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights

The key instrument in the current international indigenous movement is the United Nations Draft Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights. This Declaration has been negotiated between indigenous representatives from all over the world and governments for more than a decade and the process of having this Declaration adopted is continuing in intensified ways (Dahl and Gray 1996-97).

When looking at the Declaration from a woman's point of view, it strikes one that specific reference to women is only found in two articles in the Declaration. Article 21 says that 'Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and disabled persons'. Article 43 of the 45 articles say that 'All the rights and freedoms recognised herein are equally guaranteed to male and female indigenous individuals'.

This article may thus be considered as covering for the female perspective in the whole Declaration as such. Considering the fact that women in most societies, including indigenous ones, do have specific problems and concerns, the fact that reference to women is only found in two paragraphs, may, however, also reflect the fact that men have been the main negotiators of the Declaration, although there have been some conspicuously active and talented women.

Again, it may reflect the way most indigenous women and men see their situation: That the problems of women are a consequence of the problems of the indigenous peoples a such. It may be that these problems fall most heavily on women in some situations, like the sexual violence, the health problems and the burden of child care, all of which is aggravated when indigenous peoples are confronted with the threats of displacement, encroachment upon their lands, loss of their productive means, military occupation and other life threatening factors. On the whole, however, women's problems are regarded as general indigenous peoples' problems.

The crucial step forward in resolving indigenous women's problems is thus regarded by most indigenous peoples as the acquisition of self determination - the crucial article in the Declaration being Article 3, which says that indigenous peoples have the right to self determination. The more specific implications of this right and its manifestation in practice are a matter for negotiation with the national governments, but within the framework of an internationally established convention. Although the Declaration is not a convention in the juridical sense, it is the hope and expectation of the indigenous peoples and their supporters that it will be regarded and used as a convention in the moral sense, establishing the fact that indigenous peoples do have this right to self determination as they have the right to their ancestral lands. The adoption of the Declaration containing this paragraph will mean security and protection from displacement, illegal encroachment on indigenous land, and all the other hazardous consequences, in the form of forced involvement in the market economy, health problems, and different processes which are for women often accompanied by general oppression and sometimes sexual violence.

The Indigenous Women's Beijing Declaration

In the Beijing Declaration, which was created by the more than hundred representatives at the NGO-forum of the Fourth UN Conference on Women in 1995, women's issues are also closely linked with the general 'hard core' issues of concern to the indigenous peoples. The emphasis in the Beijing Declaration is on the 'hard facts': Militarisation of indigenous land, the disastrous effects of the New World Order, as it says, 'engineered by those who have abused and raped Mother Earth, colonised, marginalised and discriminated against us', and 'being imposed upon us viciously'. The culprits are here the rich industrialised nation-states, their transnational corporations, and the financial institutions they control, like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation. The Beijing Declaration also speaks of the appropriation and privatisation of indigenous intellectual rights, the piracy of biological, cultural and intellectual resources and heritage by transnational corporations.

Furthermore, the indigenous women at the Fourth World Conference criticised the UN Platform for Action for ignoring the overall economic facts that influence indigenous women's lives, and for ignoring the non economic activities of indigenous women, 'which have been rendered invisible, although these sustain the existence of indigenous peoples'. The critical areas of concern identified in the Platform are also critical for indigenous women (unequal access to education and health for instance) but still, the platform does not question the basic Western orientation of the prevailing education and health systems. These systems have perpetuated the discrimination against indigenous peoples. Western media have contributed to the eroding of cultural diversity, and thus 'these Western systems hasten ethnocide' and do not 'give proper importance to indigenous health care systems and the role of its practitioners', as it says in Article 13 of the Beijing Declaration.

The final conclusion of the indigenous women's evaluation of the Platform for Action is thus a rather harsh one, from a (Western) feminist perspective of some form of identity between women globally. But from an indigenous perspective, it is quite understandable that the official UN document that came out of the Fourth International Conference on Women is viewed with critical eyes, since its 'overemphasis on gender discrimination and gender equality depoliticises the issues confronting indigenous women'. The main demand, in the face of this, is again the demand for self determination. This thus again emphasised the fact that the indigenous women's own declaration, the Beijing Declaration, does not speak of health and child care and sexuality as the main issues, but sees these as directly related to the overall protection of indigenous peoples' lands and territories.

Indigenous woman leaders

At the Beijing NGO Forum, there were only woman representatives, and the more than one hundred indigenous individuals interacted, and acted together, to create their own platform for further action. At this occasion, female leadership was unquestioned. In many other contexts, women have to confront the problems faced by most non-indigenous women who take up leadership: the prejudices and resistance of male society, whether the dominant society or sometimes indigenous peoples' own communities.

In the general indigenous movement, woman representation is still scarce, compared to male representation, and the women who do stand out most probably have had to demonstrate extra skills and talents in order to compete with and gain the respect of their male partners.

In any movement, the question of leadership is crucial. But while women are leaders in some communities, although as a rule not the ones possessing the political authority, this state of affairs is to some extent reversed in the international movement. Likewise, the relationship between generations is frequently reversed. The younger represent the elder often because they have the skills, in terms of language capacity and knowledge about international affairs, plus the physical strength to travel, and the psychological ability to live outside their native communities for long periods of time. Still, most of the young people who represent their communities act on mandates from their elders, and always pay due respect to the decisions taken by the elders of their communities. This reversal of generations, however, reveals the fact that the skills required are not the same in the international contexts as in the indigenous communities and reversions of traditional patterns of leadership are found to an increasing degree, also with respect to gender roles.

A number of individual women stand out clearly in the international political process, as revealed by the speeches held at the Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva, and by the leadership of the whole UN process, including the Intersessional Working Group on the Draft Declaration, and the current negotiations on the establishment of a Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples (Dahl and Gray 1996-97; Sjørslev 1997). These women have become experts on the UN system and international diplomacy, and are highly respected among both their indigenous partners and those non-indigenous government representatives and UN officials, with whom they are dealing. Some of them are contributors to this document.

Even so, the general picture reveals a lack of balance in gender representation. The Human Rights Fund, which administers travel grants to indigenous representatives to international UN meetings, has long since decided to give priority to women, but it still receives many more applications from men than from women. This again reflects the fact that women are generally not leaders on the local community level.

On the local community level, women's lack of involvement in political processes does not come from the fact that they are outside the production process. On the contrary, as Victoria Tauli-Corpuz says about the women of the Philippine Cordillera:

> ..... *most of our women are heavily involved in economic production, particularly subsistence production, but they are still marginalized in the political and cultural arenas. In fact, it is precisely because they are burdened so much with production and reproduction work that they can hardly find time to participate in community meetings. At the same time it is also because they are very much integrated into the economic life of the community that they find themselves in the forefront of the struggle to defend and protect the ancestral territory* (Corpuz 1995).

But the importance of women's role in their local communities can no longer be overlooked, and their role in the international indigenous movement is slowly becoming just as crucial as their role in their home communities. The world still has a lot to learn from these indigenous communities, in terms of gender relations and women's roles, as in a lot of other respects.

Note

[1] Weiner's article from 1980 is one in a most useful collection of case stories from different societies around the world, most of which would today be considered indigenous (Etienne and Leacock 1980).

[2] *Dala* is the identity that must be re-established at death. The giving of bundles serves to symbolically 'untie' the deceased from the many kinship relationships (Weiner 1980:288).

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CHAPTER 9

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1995 BEIJING DECLARATION OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN

During the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (4 - 15 September 1995) and the alternative NGO Forum held in Huairou (30 August - 8 September 1995), 110 indigenous women representing almost the same number of organisations from 26 countries met at the Indigenous Women's tent to discuss, approve and sign the following document:

1995 BEIJING DECLARATION OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN

1. The Earth is our Mother. From her we get our life, and our ability to live. It is our responsibility to care for our Mother and in caring for our Mother, we care for ourselves. Women, all females are manifestation of Mother Earth in human form.

2. We, the daughters of Mother Earth, the indigenous women present at the NGO Forum of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, have come together to collectively decide what we can do to bring about a world which we would like our children and our children's children to live in. We acknowledge and build upon earlier declarations which evolved from earlier meetings and conferences, like the 1990 Declaration of the Second International Indigenous Women's Conference, the Kari-Oca Declaration of 1992, and those of various regional conferences of indigenous women, and the consultations and conferences done in preparation for this Beijing Conference.

3. This declaration is drafted in recognition of the existence of the UN Declaration of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, the Draft Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, Agenda 21 and the Rio

Declaration on Environment and Development, the Cairo Declaration, and the Copenhagen Social Summit Declaration. While we agree with most of the provisions of ILO Convention 169, we cannot fully endorse a Convention which remains silent on the use by nation-states of military force to remove indigenous peoples from their lands.

4. We stand in unity behind this '1995 Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women' which is the fruit of our collective efforts to understand the world and our situation as indigenous women. We critique the Draft Platform for Action, and articulate our demands to the international community, the governments, and the NGOs.

5. We, the women of the original peoples of the world have struggled actively to defend our rights to self-determination and to our territories which have been invaded and colonised by powerful nations and interests. We have been and are continuing to suffer from multiple oppression; as indigenous peoples, as citizens of colonised and neo-colonial countries, as women, and as members of the poorer classes of society. In spite of this, we continue to use, protect, transmit, and develop our indigenous cosmovision, our science and technologies, our arts and culture, and our indigenous socio-political and economic systems, which are in harmony with the natural laws of Mother Earth. We still retain the ethical and aesthetic values, the knowledge and philosophy, the spirituality, which conserves and nurtures Mother Earth. We are persisting in our struggles for self-determination and for our rights to our territories. This has been shown in our tenacity and capacity to withstand and survive the colonisation happening in our lands in the last 500 years.

6. The 'New World Order' which is engineered by those who have abused and raped Mother Earth, colonised, marginalised, and discriminated against us, is being imposed on us viciously. This is recolonisation coming under the name of globalisation and trade liberalisation. The forces behind this are the rich industrialised nation-states, their transnational corporations, financial institutions which they control like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). They will cooperate and compete among themselves to the last fron-

tiers of the world's natural resources located in our lands and waters.

7. The Final Agreement of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the establishment of the WTO have created new instruments for the appropriation and privatisation of our community intellectual rights through the introduction of the trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS). This facilitates and legitimises the piracy of our biological, cultural, and intellectual resources and heritage by transnational corporations. Our indigenous values and practice of sharing knowledge among ourselves, and mutual exchange will become things of the past because we are being forced to play by the rules of the market.

8. Bio-prospecting, which is nothing but the alienation of our invaluable intellectual and cultural heritage through scientific collection missions and ethnobotanical research, is another feature of recolonisation. After colonising our lands and appropriating our natural resources, they are now appropriating our human genetic resources, through the Human Genome Diversity Project. Their bid for the patenting of life forms is the ultimate colonisation and commodification of everything we hold sacred. It won't matter any more that we will disappear because we will be 'immortalised' as 'isolates of historic interest' by the Human Genome Diversity Project.

9. It is an imperative for us, as Indigenous Peoples, to stand in their way, because it means more ethnocide and genocide for us. It will lead to the disappearance of the diverse biological and cultural resources in this world which we have sustained. It will cause the further erosion and destruction of our indigenous knowledge, spirituality, and culture. It will exacerbate the conflicts occurring on our lands and communities and our displacement from our ancestral territories.

Critique of the Beijing Draft Platform for Action

10. The Beijing Draft Platform for Action, unfortunately, is not critical at all of the 'New World Order'. It does present a compre-

hensive list of issues confronting women and an even longer list of actions which governments, the UN and its agencies, multilateral financing institutions, and NGOs should do. It identifies 'the persistent and increasing burden of poverty' as the number one critical concern. It acknowledges that 'most of the goals of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies... have not been achieved'. It also acknowledges that 'in the past decade the number of women living in poverty has increased disproportionately to the number of men...'.

11. However, it does not acknowledge that this poverty is caused by the same powerful nations and interests who have colonised us and are continuing to recolonise, homogenise, and impose their economic growth development model and monocultures on us. It does not present a coherent analysis of why is it that the goals of 'equality, development, and peace', become more elusive to women each day in spite of three UN conferences on women since 1975. While it refers to structural adjustment programmes (SAP), it only talks about mitigating its negative impacts, not questioning the basic framework undergirding SAPs. It even underscores the importance of trade liberalisation and access to open and dynamic markets, which to us pose the biggest threat to our rights to our territories, resources, intellectual and cultural heritage.

12. The clear bias of the New World Order for big industries, big agri-business corporations, etc., has meant the decimation of traditional livelihood and economic activities of indigenous peoples like hunting, food gathering and harvesting, reindeer herding, subsistence agriculture, fishing, small handicraft businesses, etc. The non-economic activities of indigenous women have been ignored and rendered invisible, although these sustain the existence of indigenous peoples. Our dispossession from our territorial land and water base, upon which our existence and identity depend, must be addressed as a key problem. The Platform is very vague on this.

13. The critical areas of concern it has identified are also critical for indigenous women. While it correctly identifies unequal access to education and health as areas of concern, it does not question the basic Western orientation of the prevailing education and health

systems. It does not reflect the fact that these systems have perpetuated the discrimination against indigenous peoples. It also does not acknowledge the role of Western media, education, and religion, in eroding the cultural diversity which exists among indigenous peoples. These Western systems hasten ethnocide. They do not give proper recognition and importance to indigenous health care systems and the role of its practitioners.

14. The violence and sexual trafficking of indigenous women and the increasing numbers of indigenous women becoming labour exports, have been aggravated by the perpetuation of an economic growth development model which is export-oriented, import-dependent, and mired in foreign debt. Military operations conducted on indigenous peoples' lands use rape, sexual-slavery, and sexual trafficking of indigenous women to further subjugate indigenous peoples. The development of tourism to attract foreign capital has also led to the commodification of indigenous women and the dramatic increase in the incidence of HIV/AIDS. This reality is not addressed by the Platform. Domestic violence and the increasing suicide rates among indigenous women, especially those who are in highly industrialised countries are caused by psychological alienation and assimilationist policies characteristic of these countries.

15. While it talks about the effects of persecution and armed conflict, it does not acknowledge that many of these armed conflicts are occurring on indigenous peoples' lands. These armed conflicts are the result of the aggressive actions of transnational corporations and governments to appropriate the remaining resources on indigenous peoples' territories despite the assertion of indigenous peoples to their right to control these resources. It does not recognise that the resolution of armed conflict especially those happening on indigenous peoples lands, lies in the recognition of our rights to self-determination and to our lands and waters. The phrase 'internally displaced' in the text is bracketed, when in fact, this is the reality for many indigenous peoples all over the world.

16. Its recommended 'strategic objectives' and actions focus on ensuring women's equal access and full participation in decision-

making, equal status, equal pay, and in integrating and mainstreaming gender perspectives and analysis. These objectives are hollow and meaningless if the inequality between nations, races, classes, and genders, are not challenged at the same time. Equal pay and equal status in the so called First World are made possible because of the perpetuation of a development model which is not only unsustainable but causes the increasing violation of the human rights of women, indigenous peoples, and nations elsewhere. The Platform's overemphasis on gender discrimination and gender equality depoliticises the issues confronting indigenous women.

Indigenous Women's Proposals and Demands

17. Within the context of our understanding of our situation and our critique of the 'New World Order' and of the Beijing Draft Platform for Action, we present the following demands:

Recognise and Respect our Rights to Self-Determination

18. That all governments and international non-governmental and governmental organisations recognise the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination, and enshrine the historical, political, social, cultural, economic, and religious rights of the indigenous peoples in their constitutions and legal systems.

19. That the governments ratify and implement the ILO Convention 169 only after thorough consultations with indigenous peoples.

20. That the 1994 Final Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples be adopted and ratified by governments without any revisions and reservations. That the full participation of indigenous peoples in the open-ended Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights to further elaborate on the Draft will be ensured.

21. That the 's' in the term 'indigenous peoples' be put in all United Nations documents, declarations, and conventions. That, hereafter, we will not be referred to as ethnic minorities or cultural communities but as indigenous peoples.

Recognise and Respect our Right to Our Territories, and Right to Development, Education, Health

22. We demand that the international community and governments recognise and respect our rights to our territories. This includes our right to decide what to do with our lands and territories and to develop in an integrated, sustainable way, according to our own cosmovision.

23. We urge the governments who are opening up our territories to foreign investors especially to mining corporations, to respect these rights. Full disclosure of development projects and investments to be put into our territories should be done. We should be fully involved in making decisions on these matters. Indigenous peoples' lands which have been ravaged by mining corporations, or which have become dumping sites of toxic, radioactive and hazardous wastes, should be rehabilitated by the corporations or the governments which allowed this devastation.

24. That the governments, international organisations and NGOs assume their responsibility to alter their policies and allocate resources for the intercultural and bilingual educational systems according to our cultural principles and cosmovision. That books, audio and video materials, etc. be screened and purged of discriminatory, racist, and sexist content.

25. That the governments implement realistic policies which will solve the problem of illiteracy among indigenous and peasant women, providing them access to intercultural and bilingual education which respects indigenous cosmologies, promotes non-sexist formative education which puts women and men in touch with the land.

26. That the governments and international community implement health policies which guarantee accessible, appropriate, affordable and quality services for indigenous peoples and which respect and promote the reproductive health of indigenous women. That budget allocations to health and other social services be increased to at least 20% of the national budget and that a significant amount of this goes to indigenous peoples' communities.

27. That the indigenous health care systems and practices of indigenous peoples be accorded the proper recognition and respect and the roles of indigenous health practitioners and healers be further enhanced.

28. That the dumping of hazardous drugs, chemicals and contraceptives on indigenous peoples' communities be stopped. We demand that coercive family planning services, like mass sterilisation of indigenous women, coercive abortion programmes, be stopped. That population policies like transmigration be condemned and halted.

29. We demand that uranium mining taking place in our lands and nuclear testing in our territories and waters be stopped. If no uranium mining is done then there will be no nuclear weapons, nuclear reactors, and nuclear accidents.

Stop Human Rights Violations and Violence Against Indigenous Women

30. That the United Nations create the necessary mechanisms to monitor the indigenous peoples' situation especially those facing the threat of extinction and human rights violations and to stop these ethnocidal and genocidal practices.

31. Call on all the media and communication systems to realise that indigenous women refuse to continue to be treated and considered as exotic, decorative, sexual objects, or study-objects, but instead to be recognised as human beings with their own thinking and feeling capabilities and abilities for personal development, spiritually, intellectually and materially.

32. Demand for an investigation of the reported cases of sexual slavery and the rape of indigenous women by the military men happening in areas of armed conflict, such as those within Karen territories in Burma, Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, etc. The perpetrators should be persecuted and the survivors be provided justice and rehabilitation services.

33. Demand for an investigation of the forcible mass sterilisation and anti-fertility programmes done among indigenous women.

Identify which international and national agencies are responsible for these and make them accountable.

34. That all acts of discrimination against Indigenous Women be considered and punished as a crime.

35. That the governments create juridical and social instruments adequate to protect women from domestic and state violence.

36. That indigenous customary laws and justice systems which are supportive of women victims of violence be recognised and reinforced. That indigenous laws, customs, and traditions which are discriminatory to women be eradicated.

37. That all internally displaced indigenous peoples be allowed to return to their own communities and the necessary rehabilitation and support services be provided to them.

Recognise and Respect our Rights to Our Intellectual and Cultural Heritage and Our Rights to Control the Biological Diversity in our Territories

38. We demand that our inalienable rights to our intellectual and cultural heritage be recognised and respected. We will resist all processes seeking to destroy this heritage and alienate our resources and knowledge from us.

39. We demand that the Western concept and practice of intellectual property rights as defined by the TRIPS in GATT, not be applied to indigenous peoples' communities and territories. We demand that the World Trade Organisation recognise our intellectual and cultural rights and does not allow the domain of private intellectual rights and corporate monopolies to violate these.

40. We call for a stop to the patenting of all life forms. This, to us, is the ultimate commodification of life which we hold sacred.

41. We demand that the Human Genome Diversity Project be condemned and stopped. Those responsible for this project should be asked to make an accounting of all the genetic collections they

have taken from indigenous peoples and have these returned to the owners of these genes. The applications for patents to these genetic materials should be stopped and no applications, thereafter, should be accepted and processed. Indigenous peoples should be invited to participate in the ongoing discussions in UNESCO on the bioethics of the Human Genome.

42. We demand that governments at the local, regional, and national levels, recognise our intellectual community rights and support us in our defense of these rights, an obligation which they have undertaken as parties to the Biodiversity Convention.

43. We will continue to freely use our biodiversity for meeting our local needs, while ensuring that the biodiversity base of our local economies will not be eroded. We will revitalise and rejuvenate our biological and cultural heritage and continue to be the guardians and custodians of our knowledge and biodiversity.

Ensure Political Participation of Indigenous Women and Enhance their Capabilities and Access to Resources.

44. We demand equal political participation in the indigenous and modern socio-political structures and systems at all levels.

45. We will dialogue with non-indigenous women's organisations and formations to implement a realistic plan of solidarity with us.

46. We ask that NGOs that work with indigenous women be guided by principles of mutual respect and promote the full participation of indigenous women in action and in articulating issues regarding indigenous women and indigenous peoples.

47. Call on the funding agencies and donor agencies that support and promote women's organisations and programmes, to share space and financial resources in order to promote the development of indigenous women.

48. We will work towards reinforcing our own organisations, enhancing communications between us, and gain the space that is rightfully ours, as members of specific identities (nations and cultures) within

the Decade of Indigenous Peoples and other institutions that represent governmental and non-governmental organisations.

49. We will work towards the holding of an International Conference of Indigenous Women which will be held as part of the celebration of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

50. We express our sincere thanks to the Chinese Organising Committee and the Chinese people for their efforts in hosting and providing hospitality to us.

IWGIA PUBLICATIONS

The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) is an independent, international organisation which supports indigenous peoples in their struggle against oppression. IWGIA publishes the IWGIA **Documents** in English and Spanish. The IWGIA **Indigenous Affairs** (English) and the IWGIA **Asuntos Indígenas** (Spanish) are published four times a year. IWGIA also publishes a Yearbook - **The Indigenous World /Mundo Indígena**.

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